
THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

BY

D. THOMAS CURTIN

Author of "The Land of
Deepening Shadow," etc.

HODDER & STOUGHTON LIMITED
PUBLISHERS :: TORONTO

D515

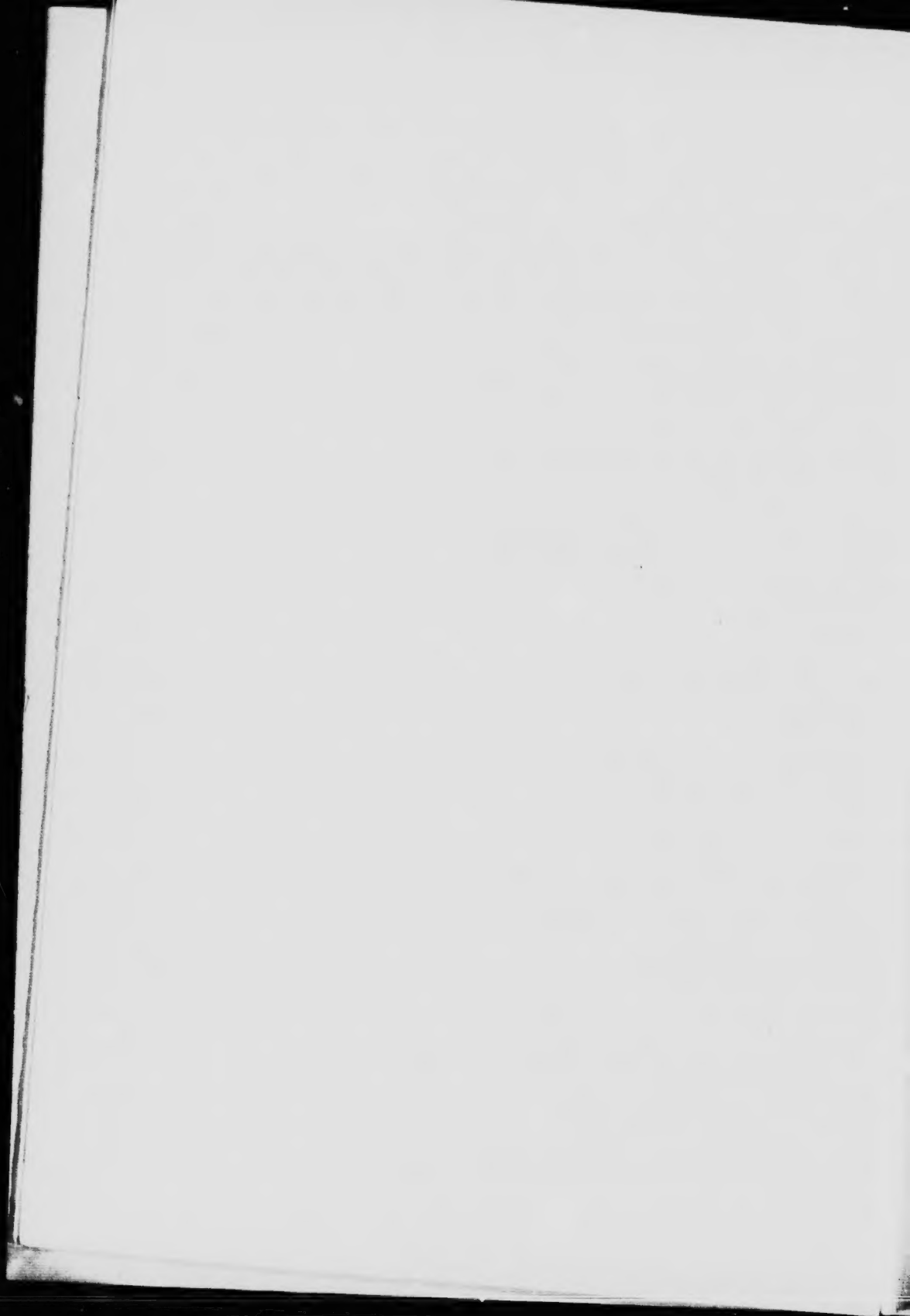
C78

1918

*Copyright, 1918,
By George H. Doran Company*

Printed in the United States of America

**TO
MY MOTHER**



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I A THOUSAND DIFFERENCES	11
II HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED	33
III THE PHONOGRAPH MAN	61
IV SMOKE CLOUDS OF DEMOCRACY	81
V THE WILSON WEDGE	109
VI THE SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE	143
VII THE DECISIVE WEAPON	174
VIII THE INVISIBLE ARMY	192
IX OUR PRISONER EXTRAORDINARY	217
X FOOTLIGHT WARFARE	232
XI A DUSTY VOLUME IN BERLIN	243
XII THE MOTHERS ACROSS THE SEA	252
XIII THE DUG-OUTLESS FRONT	268
XIV THE FRIGHTFULNESS MOON	277
XV THOU SHALT KILL	295
XVI THE QUICKSANDS	310



THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS



THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

CHAPTER I

A THOUSAND DIFFERENCES

A YEAR after that memorable first of February, 1917, when Germany unfurled the black flag of piracy in the face of the world, I was talking with a group of American soldiers at Bar-le-Duc.

I had just come back from Verdun and was telling them what I had seen in Germany nearly two years before when the crushing pincers pressed through Douaumont, Vaux, Thiaumont, Fleury and Dead Man's Hill; when once again, after the depression due to position-warfare and food shortage, I had heard the Germans talk boastingly of smashing victory and indemnities. Social Democrats had again forgotten their profession in the prospects of sweeping German victories and the indemnities that would keep down taxes.

I was delighted with the interest the American soldiers showed in everything German. Although much of our talk was of the light and bantering sort, these lads asked me questions concerning German ideas, politics and customs which showed how different one more declaration of war had made European affairs to a nation of more than a hundred million people.

12 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

We stopped talking when a group of three officer prisoners passed to the railroad station under guard. One of the three was conspicuously taller than his companions; yet it was not his height which held the attention of the boys from the States but the gashes criss-crossed on his cheek.

"That fellow has been chopped up some in this little war!" said a private named Schultz.

"Possibly," I said, "but what do you see about him that makes you think so?"

"See about him," cried Schultz. "Say, fellows, did you see that face?"

They did. Whereupon I felt it incumbent upon myself to inject a few explanations concerning German social customs. "He did not acquire those scars in this war or in any other war," I began.

"How remarkable!" breathed Schultz, with affected gravity. "All right, I'll be the Doctor Watson in the story. Would you be so good, my dear Holmes, as to explain your astounding deductions? If he did not get the scars in war, he probably got them at a little card party, I suppose?"

"He did not," I explained. "Those scars are dueling mementos that many German students take lovingly from their universities. I have seen students put salt and vinegar and other irritants into facial wounds in order to make them endure more vividly."

Schultz looked mystified. So did the others.

"I have seen fellows back home," he said, "put a beef steak poultice over a closing eye or pair of same to make these little souvenirs of a scrap less conspicuous. The Germans seem to have a different idea about some things."

"About many things," I said. "There are a thousand differences between Germany and the United States. That is why the Germans do not understand the Americans and the Americans do not understand them. There have been various kinds of wars throughout history. This is a war of ideas, of systems, and not a war of religion or of races or of blood." (Private Schultz looked at me gratefully for this last, inasmuch as the full-blooded American, Private O'Brien, had been bantering him with such remarks as that a belt with *Gott mit uns* would be more in harmony with his name than buttons with the American eagle.)

"Now, speaking about national differences," I continued, "take that detail in the unrestricted U-boat declaration in which the Imperial Government calmly instructed our State Department that we could sail a boat to Falmouth once a week and a boat from Falmouth with the same frequency, such boats to be painted in a manner suggestive of Barnum and Bailey floats. The ultimatum to Serbia was an olive-branch compared with that affront. Had the German universities offered an 'America insult prize' they could have evolved no greater slap in the face. No insult was intended, however. Official Germany has developed the habit—sufficiently safe at home—of *ordering*, and is puzzled why other peoples should refuse to obey. Do not the German people obey German official orders, and are not the German people the 'salt of the earth'?—as the Kaiser himself admits.

"Now, the most interesting and painful thing about the matter is that the *German people* consider the United States quarrelsome and war-picking because we did not accept the generous offer of their govern-

14 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

ment. I say 'generous offer' because that is the expression they use, just as they used it on a former occasion when Washington was informed that Americans could travel on four designated ships. Now, this 'generous attitude' sentiment of the German people may seem a trifling thing, but it is of the utmost importance. When a government so conducts itself that it antagonises all the free peoples of the earth, but continues to win the approval of its own well disciplined millions, who regard its slightest 'concessions' to other nations as 'generous' the world has almost unlimited opportunities for bloodshed and misery."

The boys agreed.

"But how about that fellow with the gashes?" asked Schultz. "You were telling us about putting salt into their duelling wounds to make them show up better."

"Yes," I continued, "and they keep their hair closely cropped if they are fortunate enough to have any scalp gashes. You see, social lines are very strictly drawn in the Fatherland, and snobbery is abundant. Now, the crux of the matter is, that the only Germans who indulge in duelling are the students of fashionable corps at the universities. Consequently, when a man goes through life with these external marks of higher education upon his brow, he is looked up to by the great mass of his fellow countrymen."

"But don't these marks show that he was not skillful enough to keep the other fellow's blows off?" asked Schultz, with American analysis.

"In this case, my dear Watson, your deductions are surprisingly correct—to a point. But what you do not deduce is the psychological fact that cultured Germans are eager to proclaim to the world that they were not

skilful enough to prevent an opposing swordsman getting through their guard if by so doing they can show their higher rung in the social ladder. As members of fashionable duelling corps they reach a very high rung."

But Schultz was shaking his head. He was deeply interested and trying to understand, but he simply could not fathom this particular German peculiarity.

"Funny," he concluded. "When we get into a fight, we like to leave all the marks on the other fellow!"

A simple anecdote, but one which shows a difference in American and German points of view. If we were to explore back into Private Schultz's ancestry, we should undoubtedly find a German or partial German origin. But he thinks American, and he talks American. He *is* American. The people of European countries impressed me during the war that in general they do not realise the chemicalisation which goes on from generation to generation in the United States, which gives a distinct and typical standard of nationality to the overwhelming majority of the population. Had Private Schultz's ancestry remained in the Fatherland, he might be in flesh and blood quite the same as he is to-day, but his whole personality, his ideas, his utterances, would be of an entirely different order. If there arose an opportunity such as that of Bar-le-Duc to discuss some psychological trait of the opposing side, he would, as a German soldier, do it in a philosophically serious manner. As an American, the lighter vein, with its Holmes and Watson interpolations, has become Schultz's dominant tone because his ancestors left German iron-clad regulations for the far-spread horizons of the Western World.

16 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

In Germany, as the U-boat crisis with America neared the breaking point, I used to be solemnly assured by all classes that my country would be impotent in a war against Germany because we ourselves would be plunged into civil war. To prove this assertion they would tell me that there were eighteen million Germans in the United States, all of whom, according to masterful Teutonic diagnosis, would be with the Fatherland. The assumption that all Germans who had gone to the United States and their descendants would continue loyal to the land which the emigrants had left because they were dissatisfied with it was a more gratifying assumption for Potsdam than a logical one.

The Germans have an obsession for grouping and arranging the elements which comprise the universe—in fact, cataloguing is a national pastime. In a later chapter I will show how they catalogued prisoners of war, particularly the various elements that comprise Russia, and the practical uses to which they put this cataloguing.

Before we came into the war they were doing some interesting cataloguing in the United States, some of it along the perfectly thorough, if somewhat crude lines, of plodding their way through city directories to check off for the Kaiser every name with a German flavour. A rather simple method of transfer of some of our countrymen such as Charles Schwab who is increasing shipping to counter Germany's one great chance to win decisively, and Edward Rickenbacher of Columbus, Ohio, whose favourite recreation is knocking down German airplanes.

The Germans, however, encouraged themselves to the

further extent of estimating the total number of Americans of Austro-Hungarian extraction, overlooking for the sake of statistics the otherwise obvious fact that the freed descendants and members of such races as the Bohemians, the Slovaks, and the Croatians could hardly be expected to support that side in the struggle which kept Bohemia, Slovakia and Croatia "loyal" through the efficacious, if not endearing and persuasive, powers of the military and the police.

And Ireland! How the Germans did rub their hands gleefully when they talked to me of Ireland. "Just think," I heard them cry jubilantly or sneeringly, "to all of our loyal Germans and Hungarians we can add the fifteen million Irish in America." Truly, I had reason to be alarmed in Germany. If the Swedes in the United States would only stay neutral, I felt, what a glorious civil war between the Kaiser's forces as catalogued above and the Allied Americans! Was there no such person as an American-American?—I used to wonder.

It has been my good fortune to see much of both sides, for since the beginning of the war I have made five journeys into the Central Empires and six journeys out of them. Emerging from the blackness of a coal-mine shaft to the dazzling shimmer of sunlight and blue sky, is a comparatively mild sensation compared with the feelings aroused when I changed rapidly from the observation of the activities of one side to those of the other.

People are affected by their environment to varying degrees, but all to some degree. War accentuates, and when I was with the Austrians in their first campaign against the Serbs, I involuntarily began to see the

18 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Serbs not as they really were but through the eyes of their Austro-Hungarian enemies. Therefore, the similarity to and their contrast with the picture painted for me stood out jaggedly clear when I later joined them.

So, too, from the German army against the Russian to the Russian army against the German. On one side of the Eastern battle front, my environment made one picture the Cossacks as beasts devoid of all human feelings. Indeed, while I was with the German troops I learned that they were under orders to take as many Russian prisoners as possible, with the single exception that no quarter was to be given the Cossacks.

On the other side of the Eastern front a fellow-journalist and I once dashed across the Roumanian-Bucovinian frontier, between the retreating Russians and the advancing Austro-Germans, where I had a distinct and ineffaceable impression of the first rear guard Cossacks headed toward us—an impression which crystallised into an ejaculation: "Thank God, Dunn, that you put your money in your shoe." Yet we chummed with the Cossacks for days during their retreat, eating with them, sharing their rough sleeping quarters, borrowing smokes, and lending matches. To be sure, they did not impress me as men who liked to spend their spare time frequenting public libraries; but, on the other hand, I feel that I understand them immeasurably better than if all my opinions of them bore a made-in-Germany label.

So, too, the mingled elated and dazed sensation when, after seeing khaki and French blue for months, I found myself once more among spiked helmets in the twisting streets in the fortress city of Cologne; or

ne eyes of
re, their
re paint-
ter joined

Russian,
a one side
made one
l human
n troops,
as many
e excep-
cks.

low-jour-
Bucovin-
and the
inct and
Cossacks
stallised
you put
with the
g with
rrowing
ey did
r spare
e other
bly bet-
in-Ger-

nsation
months,
nets in
ne; or

again, when shifting after a few days in the autumn of 1916, from the broad, straight, brightly-lighted streets of the German capital to Britain's capital in which I arrived after night had fallen.

My mind had been fired by German descriptions of the great metropolis on the Thames. To be sure, I had left a darkened London more than a year before, but not a blackened city such as this. The London I left had dim street lights, but now, as I was driven through the narrow, crooked thoroughfares bordered by the shadowy outlines of houses over whose windows were drawn heavy blinds, a fringe of light in an occasional window where the curtains did not fit tightly seemed, by contrast, some world of Arabian Nights. I fell to wondering what kind of life was inside those dimmed, misshapen masses bulking so weirdly about me. The streets did not seem part of London; the real London, the living thing, appeared to be caged up inside where the lights were. I thought the taxi driver who whisked me safely to the Strand the most wonderful man in the world.

During months of life in London, I grew rapidly accustomed to the change. The impressions of that first night are valuable, as are all first impressions, in that when they are analysed they are indicators of contrast.

Another tremendous change, along the same line, was my first night back in New York in the spring of 1918. Well, I walked down Broadway, not the brightly-lighted streets of Berlin, but the dark ones of London and Paris had become the standard with which I compared them. I had lost the realisation that streets could

20 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

be lighted well enough to enable one to see the expressions upon the faces of passers-by.

In New York, however, I found myself marvelling that I could see even the colours of the eyes of the passers-by. In London a small pocket electric torch flashes like a searchlight, but on Broadway one would not notice its rays because of the glare. All this transition from one country to another, this studying them under conditions of war, sharpens the observation and tends to balance the judgment on the war and its outcome.

One day, while I was sitting on one of the neat flower-bordered balconies which characterise the apartment city of Berlin, I watched some children playing in the street with a ball and stick during that abbreviated free time allowed them between their studying and their extra home and state work. I began to compare them in their play with American children of the same age in theirs. The game resembled back-yard baseball minus that "indefinable something" that makes baseball atmosphere. Among other things, they went through their play without that individuality that one would find in America. They stopped the game for a time to watch an organised group of school children, headed by Herr Lehrer, marching toward the *Grüne-wald* to indulge in some nature study. The marchers' ages ranged from eight to eleven, and they moved along in military column of fours, singing "In der Heimat" and the inevitable "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles." Among other things, the Herr Lehrer would instruct them just how to gather berries most scientifically and in a manner least likely to damage the bushes. This is part of the "war work" set aside

the expres-

marvelling
res of the
tric torch
ne would
this tran-
ing them
tion and
its out-

the neat
e apart-
playing
t abbre-
tudying
to com-
a of the
k-yard
makes
y went
at one
e for a
ildren,
Grune-
chers'
moved
n der
utsch-
ehrer
most
mage
aside

A THOUSAND DIFFERENCES

21

for them by their paternal government. This little scene caused me to continue my reflections upon the traits of nations.

I used to feel that the telegraph, the post, the railway, the steamboat and the automobile sandpapered down the contours of individual characteristics which differentiate one people from another. Despite the ever decreasing size of our planet, however, certain fundamental barriers have been growing higher between various nations, particularly between the citizens of the American democracy and the subjects of the German autocracy. There is such a thing as the soul of a people, and these German children grow up with quite a different outlook upon the world than do American children raised under a wholly different set of conditions.

Differences in customs are always interesting.

One day, after a long tramp from Bethmann-Hollweg's estate at Hohenfinow, I took the train at Dahmsdorf to return to Berlin.

In addition to an American companion, there were three others in the compartment which would seat ten in this old-fashioned, non-corridor train. At the last moment, a party of six clambered in—three men followed by their wives. They had been strolling about the pleasant bit of rolling country near Buchow and were happy and tired at the end of their day's outing. The men promptly sank into three of the vacant seats with grunts and other expressions of relief. Unfortunately, there were only two seats for the three women who trailed after them, which were taken by the first two to come in. Apparently the whole party conducted itself upon the principle of first come, first served.

22 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Had this been my first trip to Germany, I might have expected that the husband of the standing woman might merely rushed along to save a seat for her. As it was, I somewhat less than half expected that such was the case. He, with the others, expressed regret that there were only five seats for six tired people. For about half an hour I sat comfortably back in the corner, interested far less in the flat scenery than in the psychological phenomenon of how long the able-bodied husband would refrain from suggesting to his wife that she might like at least to share his seat with him in turn. To my dismay, my impetuous companion rudely interrupted my investigation of physical truths by rising and offering the woman his place in a tone which mingled forced politeness with anger. She accepted with thanks and a look of genuine gratitude, while her sturdy husband raised his straw hat, and, settling back even more contentedly, added his profuse thanks.

I have seen much of women standing in America in public conveyances, to be sure; but I never expect to see an able-bodied American husband sit by and thank a man who gives his seat to his wife.

In this war, I have felt how hermetically sealed are the frontiers enclosing each group of belligerents, and how little the millions of the one really know of the conditions pertaining among the millions of the other. Profoundly interesting and important are the feelings which one side ascribes to its adversary on certain activities of the war, each being prone to herald some difficulty or new setback of its enemy as producing a condition that can not be endured.

For example, in 1916, during the battle of the Somme, I was sitting in the back room of a Berlin

Weinstube, where several of us journalists had learned to congregate because we somehow mysteriously understood that in this particular eating establishment we could get meat without meat tickets,—even on the two meatless days a week. The German citizens who patronised the place had no such privilege. The reason that we Americans had it was not because the proprietor or the *Wilhelmstrasse* looked upon us as jolly good fellows, but because the proprietor and the *Wilhelmstrasse* connived to permit us to violate the iron-clad food regulations of Berlin in order that we might feel the happier in the Fatherland and reflect this happiness as Germany's happiness to our readers across the seas. Yet this was only part of the reason, for we soon had excellent grounds to believe that the meat was but bait to lure us into a dictaphone trap. The particular day of which I speak was a meatless day, which, in our case, as five of us sat about the table, simply meant that there had to be a camouflage of egg over our meat so that the *Gottstrafters* of England and America at neighbouring tables would not be aware of our unheard of privileges.

One of our number was possessed of a copy of the *London Times* into which he buried himself. Finally he glanced up. "My God, men, just look at those losses!"

A German at a neighbouring table, who understood English, came over at this remark, looked at the *Times*, and then beckoned to his companions, who also joined us. The first German ran his finger slowly down one column of finely printed losses, then down another until he had crossed the page of seven columns; then over on the next page and down more columns. "The Eng-

24 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

lish cannot stand that," he said, "or in any event, they will not be willing to stand that. When the English people grasp fully the meaning of these huge casualties which they are suffering on the Somme, they will refuse to make further sacrifices and the end of the war will be in sight."

Another back room, this one in a venerable restaurant on Fleet Street in London where a group of Englishmen of activities as diverse as those in Addison's Spectator Club, are accustomed to sit down to a luncheon that suggests the eighteenth century! In June, 1917, ten months after the little back-room scene in Berlin, I sat among these genial conversationalists, men exceptionally well informed in all that pertains to English history and life,—fair-minded men, quietly determined that Germany be defeated, but not given to the use of invectives against her. They were discussing the great news of the week, the explosion of the biggest mine of the war on Messines Ridge.

"I feel confident," said one, "now that we have taken Vimy Ridge, that Messines is the beginning of the end and the war will be over this summer. Think of the terror which those explosions must have inspired! Certainly the German soldiers will be unwilling to continue to fight when the full realisation of the truth of Messines dawns upon them. Then they will be sincere in talking of a real peace."

The others agreed.

I tried to express the opinion, however, that although Messines had been a very terrible thing for those Germans who happened to be occupying the ground blown up or near it, that, after all, only a slight part of the German army had any first-hand

knowledge of the explosion, and therefore Germany as a whole would be no more affected by it than she would be, or the Allies would be, by innumerable other unpleasant features of the war.

Of particular interest I have found the varied ideas in Europe of America during the war. I came upon some in an out-of-the-way manner in the very first days when I was seeking to make a circuit from Budapest to the Austro-Serbian front through Hungary's most eastern province of Siebenbürgen, a rough, picturesque country whose Szeckler peasants lay claim to descent from the original Huns.

In one of the little villages, half Hungarian and half subjugated Roumanian, I made the acquaintance of the village school master, he being of the latter race.

During supper, he told me how he longed to be able to travel but that he had been only as far as Budapest. He asked me many questions about America—Niagara Falls being of especial interest to him. He spoke of his books, being most proud of the fact that he had two relating to my country. Supper over, he showed me these as we sat in the garden where the gentle breezes of evening mingled the fragrance of the hay fields and the flowers. I began to grow interested when I saw that the illustrations were mainly of rough mountain trails and rocky coasts, with fishing villages, polar-bear-seaside-resorts, and Indians dancing about camp fires.

"I suppose you have seen much of this dancing in America," he observed.

I might have told him that since 1910 it had been growing very popular in New York and other terpsichorean centres, but I did not wish to confuse him.

"Sometimes, in my classes," he explained, "I have

26 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

occasion to refer to Africa and America, and I find that these books will give my pupils some ideas about your country."

I mentally agreed that they certainly would give them some ideas.

Of course, this is a rather unusual case. But did the members of the German government really understand us? Do they understand us now?

They comforted themselves with their catalogues, their thoughts of civil war, and a money-mad populace willing to pay any price for peace.

"What would you do?" I was repeatedly and insolently asked in Germany. "You are not soldiers; you have no army." Little wonder that I found more than ninety per cent of the Kaiser's subjects wildly clamouring for unrestricted U-boat warfare and utterly contemptuous of anything that the United States could do should she come into the war.

In September, 1916, Herr Stresemann, the Great Industrialist member of the Reichstag, famous for his philippics against America, stopped me on Unter den Linden with the remark, "Do you think that your country will break with us if we use the submarine to its fullest capacity?"

"I am absolutely certain of it," I said.

"Well, we're going to do it, none the less," he declared, emphatically. "After all, what can the United States do in this war? You are making munitions now for our enemies because of financial gain, and there's nothing more that you can do. You are not a nation in the German sense. You have a vast extent of country, to be sure, and numbering population as one would cattle, you have more than we. But what a population!

I will tell you what your country is: *America is a continent of jelly, full of indissoluble lumps of foreigners.*"

After three and one-half years in warring Europe, I have returned to my own country for a brief visit. As I travel about during a definite transition phase of our history, when, after a year of preparation, during which we seemed to have only one foot in the war, we are now keenly awakening to the truth that this is *our* war, I see the rising tide against everything savouring of Prussianism, and with it a growing desire to mobilise all our resources to win the war.

I used to hear the Germans scoff that we selfishly thought only of individual money-making—an opinion existing in many other countries. Yet, I now see the growing spirit of sacrifice for an ideal among the majority of Americans equal to anything I have seen in Europe during the war. Above all, I see the real soul of a unified America growing out of the deadly cancers which fed on a long-continued impossible neutrality.

Every day I witness scenes which impress upon me afresh the absurdity of those remarks dinned into my ears in the Land of the Kaiser. Some races can be kicked into submission; others can be kicked into a fight. We rank very high among the latter. Clearly the Germans, although they had unlimited access to information about our country, were entirely wrong in their deductions, principally psychological, from such information. Have America and her Allies been more correct in their opinions of Germany?

Is there not a tendency among all peoples to form

28 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

their judgment of other peoples upon institutions which they know?

Once in early springtime I was talking with a native among the hills of Wales that rise above the Wye, and I commented upon the colour-harmony of the very red soil with the greenery. He saw nothing unusual about it. When I enlarged upon the point, he said, "Why, it is simply ploughed land."

"I know," I went on, "but it's the colour of which I speak."

"Why," he exclaimed, "I thought that all ploughed land was red."

He certainly did think so; but despite his belief, there is white soil on the chalk-downs of Surrey and Kent and very black soil in Missouri. Because this countryman believed all soil red does not harm him nor the world in the least; but if statesmen, particularly those of democracies, fail to differentiate certain distinctions between their own and other countries they might cause their country almost unlimited bloodshed and even destruction.

Most citizens of any nation are engaged in some kind of business which occupies the bulk of their attention. Some people hold the opinion that statesmanship should be a business in the sense that leaders of the nations whose annihilation Germany was plotting should have been aware of the danger and taken pains to acquaint their people with it. It should be borne in mind, however, that one of the difficulties of such an open course is that when a statesman in a peaceful land warns of a threatening war, he is considered a jingo with a chip on his shoulder.

I have often heard remarked in America how Ger-

many fooled the whole world about her intention to make war. It certainly is our own fault and that of all the Allied countries if we have been fooled. The Germans were most open in their talk of war.

Before the war I used to be profoundly impressed with the differences in conversation of American school and university students and those of Germany. I left lads talking about athletic games, major-league baseball standings and the professional and business careers they contemplated, to live among school boys of sixteen to eighteen and university students somewhat older who talked about menaces to Germany and the wars she would fight.

I remember a youngster of eleven at one of my Berlin boarding-houses—a youngster typifying the youth of Germany—who used to come home from his school and in heroic pose strike his chest, while his eyes gleamed, as he cried, "*Frankreich ist mein Feind.*" (France is my enemy.)

During the "Agadir" crisis in 1911, I was in Alsace, where I was very friendly with several German officers whom I knew and liked. I was walking with one of them one afternoon, just outside of Strassburg, when he remarked, "I am sorry that I can not go farther to-day, but we have new war orders that we must never be more than ten minutes away from our horses." His eyes glowed. "Ah," he said, "how we long to march against France! We have a far better army than had our fathers."

A few days later I noted an air of gloom settled upon the garrison. I met my friend and asked him the reason. He looked sullen and disappointed. "We are told that if we rush into France, England will stand by

30 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

her, and therefore we must wait—and prepare,” he explained. But his anger was rising at the thought of delay. “Damnation upon England,” he cried. “You just see, we’ll get our chance some day.”

I went to England, where I tried to find a war-fever against Germany. For the English, however, all soil was red. But just because they were not talking and thinking about war, it did not necessarily follow that the Germans were not doing so. The English were making the perilous mistake of judging Germany after the standards of their own environment. Had the Secretary for Foreign Affairs understood Germany, he might have advised the Cabinet, Parliament and the people; but Sir Edward Grey, one of the most kindly men that ever lived, was a high-minded gentleman who looked for the good and not the bad in humanity. Add to this trait the fact that he had never been to Germany, he easily fell into the error of seeing that country through the eyes of Prince Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador to Great Britain,—he, too, a man of peace and a perfect gentleman, and being such, at odds with Potsdam and the Wilhelmstrasse.

Thus Britain, impatient with the few voices crying in the wilderness, remained snugly unprepared, in consequence of which she has been trying for four years to drive the Germans out of territory which they occupied in very much less than four months.

In the autumn of 1915, during the enemy snipe through Serbia, a member of the British Government raised a protest against a London newspaper because that newspaper had printed an illuminating map of Europe and Asia with guide-posts marking German intention from Antwerp to the Persian Gulf. The mem-

ber indignantly called for the suppression of the newspaper on the ground that the map showed the enemy possibilities of expansion. Of course it would be a pity to put Wanderlust notions into the heads of the home-loving Germans, but isn't there something ludicrous in the idea that a people who had done little more than glance at occasional maps of the near East were hush-hushing the secret of the possibilities of the region which another people had scientifically surveyed? Isn't there something tragic, too, in the realisation that the lives of men and the destiny of nations are sometimes entrusted to such officialdom?

Since the beginning of the war, I have observed three stages of opinion among the Allied countries regarding the fight being carried on by Germany. The first stage may be summed up: "Germany prepared for the war and chose her own time. We did not prepare. Isn't it miraculous that we ever managed to stop the German army?"

After the Germans dug themselves into position-warfare, thus affording the Allies the opportunity to rush preparations, the characteristic tone of stage two, especially popular among French and British military correspondents was: "The Allies' superior resources in man-power and material will tell. When these are organised, Germany can not escape defeat."

Stage three I find strongest in America as the fifth year of the war gets under way. It has existed to varying extents among the nations of Europe warring against Germany but has tended to diminish among them because of their proximity to the actual war. This is the stage of, "Isn't it wonderful how Germany manages to hold out?"

32 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

In the following chapters I shall consider the reasons why Germany "holds out" in the light of the facts as I have found them throughout Europe and the United States. In doing this it is of utmost importance to emphasise some of the thousand differences. In the first place we must understand clearly the differences between the German system of government and our own in order fully to grasp the significance of such great factors in the war as the enemy's struggle against blockade, the forces for and against revolution in Germany, the degree to which the struggle may be continued, and the future of propaganda and commercial conflicts.

DS

reasons
facts as
United
ance to
In the
ferences
nd our
f such
against
n Ger-
e con-
mercial

CHAPTER II

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED

THE first step toward a peaceful community of nations is the smashing of German military domination, i.e., the smashing of the German system of government. What is this system of government and wherein does it differ from our own?

Two common conceptions of it are wrong: In the first place, it is not an organisation of supermen; secondly, it is not a despotism holding down the majority of the German people against their will.

Germany is constantly spoken of as an autocracy, as was Russia: She is. But the autocratic head enjoys his tremendous power because he is the apex of the most complete and efficient *bureaucratic* system known to history.

Germany is like a colossal but perfectly working telephone switchboard, the owner and director of which is the Kaiser, while the immediate operator is the Imperial Chancellor, who makes and breaks connections at his master's direction, and so on down through the entire system of millions of people, high and low. Each is directly responsible to the chief next above him in rank. Neither the system nor anybody in it is responsible to the people. Most of the people, however, are welded to the system by ingenious devices which will be explained later.

34 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Germany is not only a bureaucracy, but a *military* bureaucracy, inasmuch as the military and not the civil state is the ideal. Its head has never been in the least reticent about proclaiming that he is not responsible to the people. In 1891, after his dismissal of Bismarck, William II informed his subjects:

"One, and only one, is lord of the land, and I am that one."

A little later he said to the Prussian Guard:

"You have sworn fidelity to me, which means that you are now soldiers. You have surrendered yourselves to me body and soul. For you there is only one enemy, and that is my enemy. In the present machinations of the Socialists it may happen that I order you to shoot down your own relatives, your brothers, even your parents—may God spare such necessity!—but even then you must follow my command without demur."

A few months later he said:

"The soldier shall not have a will of his own. You have all one will, and this is my will; there is only one law, and that is my law."

The people accept this, which they reverently and gloriously call "discipline." Their feeling on the subject is about as susceptible to verbal argument from the side of the Allies as a man-eating tiger would be to the billing and cooing of a conscientious objector.

From time to time, during the present Kaiser's reign we have heard a good deal of "anti-militaristic socialism" and "turbulent scenes in the Reichstag";

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 35

but in spite of these titbits of cabled news, democracy has never been able to lift its head in Germany. In a speech delivered at Königsberg on August 25, 1910, William II displayed to an admiring nation this gem of autocratic eloquence:

"It was on this spot that my grandfather, in his own right, placed the royal crown of Prussia upon his head, emphasising once again the fact that it was bestowed upon him by the will of God alone, not by parliaments or meetings and decisions of the people, and that he thus regarded himself as the chosen instrument of Heaven, and as such carried out his duties as a ruler and a lord. . . . I consider myself such an instrument of Heaven, and shall go on my way without regard to the views and opinions of the day."

Some of the outside world gasped and rubbed its eyes, and some said, "How funny!" But the people of Germany went on making new streets and city squares and reverently affixing to them the names "Wilhelm," and "Hohenzollern," and "Kaiser."

The Kaiser's address to his Eastern army in December, 1914, should be carefully reflected upon by every American because nothing could more clearly show his attitude toward us and our allies, an attitude which we can not ignore, since it is backed up by the efficient support of the millions of his empire. In that memorable keynote address to his spike-headed warriors of the East, he said, with admirable modesty and restraint:

"Be convinced that you are the Chosen People!

The Spirit of God has descended upon me, for I am the Emperor of the Germans!

36 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

I am the Instrument of the Most High!
I am His Sword and Spokesman!
Misery and death to all those who oppose my Will!
Misery and death to all those who do not believe
in my Mission!
Misery and death to Cowards—all enemies of the
German people shall be annihilated!
God has decreed their destruction; God commands
you through my mouth to carry out his Will!"

The Kaiser's conception of the derivation of his ruling power from heaven and his consequent irresponsibility to the people should be constantly kept in mind when the German system of government is under consideration.

In America, after the thirteen original states had fought for and achieved their independence, they formulated a constitution under which the elected leaders derived all their powers from the people. It should be remembered that never in history have the German people as a whole, unlike the American, ever fought for freedom. No political rights have been taken away from them but certain rights and privileges have been granted them by their rulers.

Nevertheless, the Kaiser does not govern them by caprice or despotic arbitrariness without any constitution. The Germans have just as real a constitution as we have. This phrase, however, is misleading to the average American who instinctively feels that when a thing is "constitutional" it is in accordance with some principle based upon the sovereignty of the people. It so happens, as I shall show, that the German constitution is a written negation of the positive principles

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 37

of constitutional government as we understand those principles.

In 1848 Frederick William IV, King of Prussia, granted his subjects a constitution—a weird document, according to our lights, but still a constitution. In 1867, after the close of the war with Austria, at the instigation of Prussia, the various German state governments—not the people—developed from this a constitution for the twenty-two states comprising the North German Confederation. This in turn was extended in 1871 into the constitution of the German empire. This document, compact, clear and straight to the point, is a crowning monument to Prussia and all that Prussia stands for. In the words of the first German emperor, William I, “Germany is an enlarged Prussia.”

The Kaiser has clearly defined duties and rights under the constitution, but it is important to remember that the people did not give them to him, after the manner of the American people to their President. He gave them to himself under the masterful guidance of Bismarck, whose pet abhorrence was the rule of the people.

The eleventh article of the constitution decrees that “It will be the duty of the Kaiser to represent his Empire among the nations, to declare war, and to conclude peace in the name of the Empire, to enter into alliances and treaties with foreign states, to credit and receive ambassadors.”

There is a qualification, however, which says that for a declaration of war in the name of the Empire the consent of the Bundesrat or the Federal Council is required, unless an attack is made upon the federal

38 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

territory.* To the reader unfamiliar with the ways and wiles of Prussian documents this might appear a considerable check upon the autocracy of the Kaiser. Such would be the case if the Bundesrat were responsible to the people; but it is not.

The Bundesrat is not an upper house similar to the United States Senate as has been stated during the war by a zealous American professorial protagonist of Kaiserism (an "exchange professor,"—who exchanged his duty and loyalty to the citizens of his own country for the approbation of the Kaiser and his sycophantic coterie of German professors)—who wrote a book which was fathered by the German government in which he deliberately and dishonestly, by the use of half

* Even if it were, the clause "Unless an attack is made upon the federal territory" would have given the Emperor the right under German reasoning in 1914 to declare war upon Russia, since the Kaiser and his appointees in the army and the foreign office so organised official correspondence that the politically baby-bottled German people unquestioningly absorbed the inspired idea that the Kaiser had tried to preserve peace, but that Russia's mobilisation order, after the Kaiser had expressly told her that she must not issue it, was equivalent to an attack upon federal territory.

What the public did not know was that their rulers, having determined at the Potsdam Council of July 5th upon war and being desirous of hastening its coming in order to reap full advantage of their superior preparation, ingeniously forced Russia to mobilise by instigating a sham addition of the semi-official newspaper, the *Lokal Anzeiger*, with the headlines that Germany had ordered a general mobilisation. The Russian ambassador in Berlin of course at once telegraphed this news to Petrograd.

The small edition of the newspaper was promptly withdrawn and a contradiction published, which the Russian ambassador also immediately telegraphed. This second telegram might have held up the Czar's mobilisation which was considered by the Russians to be a counter to the German mobilisation, had not the war organisers of Germany taken advantage of the fact that the state owns the telegraph and with characteristic Prussian thoroughness cleared the wires for the first telegram and blocked them for twelve hours in the transmission of the second.

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 39

truths, sought to win American sympathy for Germany in the days when we were neutral by representing the governments of both countries as full of parallels.

The Bundesrat is an institution peculiar to the constitutional system of Germany—a master-stroke of a masterful document which, in true Bismarckian fashion, gives the people privileges with the right hand and takes them away with the left. A “concession” in the German constitution bears precisely the same relation to the simple German citizen that bait on the sharp end of a hook does to a fish.

The Bundesrat is a body of delegates appointed by the rulers of the several states. Prussia appoints 17; Bavaria 6; Saxony and Wurtemberg 4 each, and so on to a total of 58. It is not in the main a deliberative body, since the delegates act according to instructions, the delegation of each state casting a solid vote. If you add up the number of delegates of the states other than Prussia, you make the comforting discovery that Prussia is outnumbered by 41 votes. Prussia has not a majority and has surrendered her influence, you may say. True, she has not a majority, but it is also true that Prussia never yields; she only seems to yield. When the Prussian government announces a concession it is healthful for one to hone his bayonet and load his rifle.

In the imperial constitution Prussia has carefully made provision for her lack of a majority in the Bundesrat. Note two important exceptions to the majority rule of that body:

1—“Where there is a division of opinion concerning proposed legislation on military affairs, navy, tariff and certain taxes, as well as the arrangements proposed

40 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

for carrying out the tariff and tax laws, the vote of Prussia is decisive if it is cast in the favour of *status quo*."

2—"Amendments to the constitution shall be considered rejected when they have against them 14 votes of the Bundesrat."

The "joker" in this is that Prussia's 17 delegates are appointed by the King of Prussia who since 1871 is *ipso facto* German Emperor, and the 17 vote in a solid block as he directs: therefore, according to paragraph 1, any attempt among the other German states to liberalise a militaristic nation can be legally killed by the war-lord who said to his army of the East, "Misery and death to all those who do not believe in my mission."

All this means that reactionary, anti-democratic Junker Prussia can constitutionally preserve the German menace of militarism. Moreover, Prussia practically controls the vote of certain other states which are at one with her in ideas and practices—as, for instance, mediæval Mecklenberg, where all power and privilege continue to rest in the *Ritterschaft*, or knights who possess the land.

Furthermore, the heads of all the German states may be counted upon to stand with the King of Prussia, who is the Emperor of Germany, against any innovation tending seriously to weaken princely and royal power. They can do this constitutionally through the Bundesrat, which is in practice nothing more or less than a trade-union of sovereigns.

In regard to legislation, moreover, the Bundesrat works an effective check on the Reichstag.

In form, the Reichstag might be considered an ideal legislative body of the people's representatives, elected

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 41

for a term of five years upon a suffrage granting to every male above the age of twenty-five the right to cast a secret ballot. For a stranger unfamiliar with the German system to attend a Reichstag meeting is for him to believe that Germany is a land of unrestricted speech. When the Social Democrats have the floor—or, in this body, the platform—he might conclude that the German Empire is on the verge of becoming the most liberal of democracies.

That appearances are sometimes deceitful is especially true of Germany, as even Lord Haldane might now admit.

The ably edited *Arbeiter Zeitung*, the Socialist organ of Vienna, discussing the Maurice episode which stirred British politics in May, 1918, in a satiric article on the parliaments of the Central Powers says:

"The terrible thing is that English generals, when they rebel, address themselves to Parliament. Is this military? The proper view of parliament for a genuine soldier has recently been explained to us in the instruction for education in the German Army. There we are plainly told that *a parliament is a talking-shop*. What has a soldier to do with a talking shop?—unless, indeed, as recently happened in Kieff in Russia, he has received orders to break up the talking-shop."

The *Arbeiter Zeitung* is right.

The proportion of democratic legislation growing out of gales of talk is abysmally low—lower than in any other parliament in the world.

Why? The answer is a constitutional one.

In the United Kingdom, in the self-governing British colonies, and in general throughout the democracies

42 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

of the world, government is based upon the will of the people. They constitute the broad foundation. Then come the people's representatives in the national legislature or parliament; higher still the members of the cabinet, who are likewise members of the legislature by virtue of popular election; then the prime minister, who is the actual or virtual holder of the chief executive power. It is like a triangle based upon the people, with the prime minister the apex.

This picture, with but slight variations, applies to all democracies, though sometimes with the substitution, as in the United States, of an elective head who is not responsible to the legislature, but draws his power direct from the people.

In Germany there is indeed a parliament, the Reichstag, containing the people's representatives, and hence based upon the people's will; but there the similarity with the real democracies ends. It is a similarity which has confused the world and soothed it while Germany prepared—a similarity intended by Bismarck to confuse the German people themselves.

Instead of an unbroken succession of steps from the people to the chief executive of the democracy, there is in Germany an all-important break after the step from the people to the Reichstag. Here we come to quite another series of steps, which leads not upward but downward.

The Kaiser is at the top, exercising authority *not by the will of the people, but by the grace of God*. He appoints an imperial chancellor and ministers of all departments of state—men responsible to him alone, and dismissed by him at pleasure. He and they constitute a cabinet of super-Germans, above the Reichs-

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 43

tag, but not of it. From this lofty position they graciously descend from the German political heaven until they come into touch with the people's representatives on those occasions when it is necessary to secure their sanction to governmental measures.

This leads us to yet another important difference between the parliaments of democracy and the Reichstag. The former normally consist of two main parties, one of which holds the reins of power until the people demand a change. Although so-called third parties may appear, and even maintain themselves for a time, they tend, in the course of these processes of reformation constantly going on, to become absorbed into one or the other of the two leading groups. Our own Progressive party is a typical case in point.

The opposite is true in the German Reichstag, where parties are constantly tending to disintegrate. The absence of the power to form cabinets and undertake the constructive work of governing liberates all parties to go to their devious ways, and gives unrestrained play to the tendency toward segregation. That explains why there are in the Reichstag so many different parties or fractions—varying from ten to sixteen, in all—each with its party organisation and leader.

How does the government manipulate these various parties? It does so through the so-called institutions of the "block."

Parties were poisonous to Bismarck. He therefore treated them as poisons, figuratively speaking, using one poison as the antidote of another, so as to neutralise the action or influence of both; and his method is still in vogue.

For example, if the Conservatives desire a certain

44 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

measure which is opposed by the Social Democrats, the chancellor can say to the Conservatives:

"Modify your opposition to the Social Democrats, or your measure will be defeated."

Similarly he will inform the Social Democrats:

"Withdraw some of your opposition to the Conservatives, or you will not get some other concession that you want."

Thus, by forcing opposing parties to compromise their most extreme demands, the hands of the government are freed to deal with those policies or measures which the government most desires. Not only individual parties or fractions, but groups of parties, or blocks, are thus pitted against one another in order to enable the government to push through legislative schemes which it regards as necessary and beneficial.

With the exception of the Social Democrats, the German parties have in the main been content with this method. They call it "strong cabinet government modified by parliamentary action."

When things do not move to the Kaiser's satisfaction, he may decide that the chancellor has become worn out at the game. Then he "accepts the resignation" of that official, and appoints a new medicine-man who can open up a fresh bag of tricks. He has already done this twice to further the intricate politics of the war.

Von Bethmann-Hollweg, who shouldered the burdens of chancellor from 1906 to July, 1917, had antagonised the Pan-German disciples of "force alone" because he sought to reconcile gentlemanly and musical instincts with the peculiar duties of the Wilhelmstrasse. For his undiplomatic truthfulness in the confession to the Reichstag at the beginning of the war that his country

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 45

was committing a wrong in entering Belgium, they never forgave him. In the London *Times* in November, 1916, I predicted his downfall in the following paragraph:

"The military party in Germany, who are flaying von Bethmann-Hollweg for his ignorance of the intentions of Britain's Dominions and of Ireland, never cease to throw in his teeth the fact that he had millions of pounds (not marks) at his back to make the necessary investigations, and that he failed. That and his lack of the use of ruthlessness, his alleged three days' delay to mobilise in 1914, are the principal charges against him—charges which, in my opinion, may eventually result in his downfall."

They did cause his downfall after his usefulness in lulling America terminated at the time Count Bernstorff was handed his passports. But the mere fact that he continued chancellor in the third year of the war instead of that office being filled by Tirpitz or one of his disciples, has changed the course of history by delaying our own participation.

When Michaelis was appointed to succeed von Bethmann-Hollweg, it was never intended that he should be more than a transition-link which would afford German statesmen an opportunity to "mark time" while the complicated events of the period were crystallising. After the Kaiser had "condolently accepted" the resignation of "Mark-Time-Michaelis," he appointed Count Hertling for a definite and highly important political reason.

The remarkable feature of the appointment is that the new chancellor is not a Prussian but a Bavarian.

46 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Three reasons determined the selection of a Bavarian:

1. Friction between Bavaria and Prussia has been growing since 1916 because Bavaria, who is better off for food than is most of Prussia, refuses to share it and also passes strict regulations limiting Prussian feeders who sweep down from the North. By appointing one man the vanity of a whole state could be exploited.

2. Austria having achieved her offensive war aims, is chafing more and more under a dragging war. Therefore any idea that the war was being lengthened because of Prussian Pan-German policies, would make it more difficult for the Hapsburgs to apply effectively the cement which keeps their mosaic empire in being. For this reason, since Austria's sympathy is with South Germany rather than with North Germany, the appointment of a chancellor from South Germany would draw the fangs of the Prussian conquest idea developing in Austria.

3. The German rulers never lose sight in the war of the importance of bluffing outsiders. They have used, and will continue to use this weapon right through the peace conference. They know perfectly well that the outside world has been differentiating between Prussia and Bavaria; therefore, Hertling's appointment would lead it to believe that Prussianism was waning in the German Empire before the advancing liberalism of the South.

But the Prussian masters know their man.

Hertling's "Democratic Tendencies" are best shown by quotations from a book of political essays, published in 1897, which Maximilian Harden brings to light:

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 47

"Are democratic institutions and the democratic way of thinking really sufficient guarantees for the freedom of the individual? The contrary is the case."

"In a democratic national state, the mass of men of middle stature immediately turns in jealousy and mistrust against any one who distinguishes himself from the rest by any unusual characteristic."

"Instructive light is thrown upon the nature of the socialist state of the future by the tyranny which unskilled and inferior workmen are wont to practice upon the efficient and skilled."

"It is not necessary for the monarch to be the only authority in the state, but he must be the highest authority, and as such may not be called to account by any other authority. *The full conception of a monarchy includes the rightful irresponsibility of the monarch.** While monarchy is only a state form existing side by side with other forms, the rightful foundation of kingly power can be derived from no other source than that from which all right is derived. It is the moral ordering of the world which traces back to God as supreme creative cause. Not only formally, but materially the supreme decision rests with the monarch. He nominates ministers according to his own pleasure and free will. If in doing so he takes account of public opinion or of the opinion prevailing among the representatives of the people, he may be satisfying a requirement of wisdom, but not any rightful demand."

The Kaiser himself could not do a better job on the divine right theory of government.

*Throughout the book the italics are mine unless the contrary is stated.

48 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

So much for the moment for the chancellor.

What power has the Reichstag to embarrass him to the rest of the Government? Let us return to a consideration of the Reichstag. We have thus far dwelt upon its lack of power.

Bismarck realised that the Reichstag really did have a limited amount of power and it could develop itself into a trouble-making organisation if the military side of the Government allowed things to get out of hand. Able and resourceful, he therefore planned to destroy its power by a *coup d'état*, the details of which make his forging of the Ems telegram look almost like honest diplomacy. He chose the accession of William II as a propitious time to put his plan into operation, which was to dissolve the Reichstag by the Emperor's authority, he counting upon such sudden dissolution to lead to Socialist uprisings in the streets. Fighting would ensue, blood would flow. Then the German Emperor would declare that he could no longer govern under existing conditions and he would renounce the imperial crown. The sovereigns of all the German states would be called to a conference where suggestion would be made that the German Empire should be reconstituted under the presidency of the King of Prussia; but the King of Prussia would declare that he would be willing to again resume the imperial crown only if the imperial constitution was so altered that all those Germans who supported a policy hostile to the State, and especially all Socialists, would be disenfranchised and the secret ballot abolished.

Bismarck believed that in their patriotic excitement the German people would have supported this. Then, after their sentimental ardour had cooled, they would

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 49

find themselves without a Parliament. They would thus have no forum where future discontent might be voiced, and any individual who started to rise up with Democratic ideas, would be promptly squelched by the military.

Had William I still reigned, Bismarck could have won him to the support of this plan; but William II developed a temperament in youth which brooked no partnership in governing, much less a dictatorship from even the Iron Chancellor who had welded the Empire which became the inheritance of the young Hohenzollern.

According to the Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, William II told the Prince that he was unwilling to act on Bismarck's suggestion and thus begin his reign by shooting his subjects in the effort to obtain a *coup d'état*. He was confident of his strength to remain absolute by other means. He has thus far succeeded in keeping the Reichstag subjected to his will; in fact, Germany is a more formidable foe than had Bismarck's *coup d'état* been carried out; for the Reichstag, with its speeches that are so often incorrectly gauged by democratic nations, has proved a decoy during four years of war to lead the enemies of Germany into the deadly war-aims-talk-trap while the Kaiser behind the Reichstag veil could marshal his forces for more stupendous onslaughts.

There may come a time, though, should the war go *heavily* against Germany, when Bismarck's misgivings may come true. These he best expressed when he wrote to the Conservative leader, von Heldoff, "I will devote the last years of my life to correcting my greatest mistake—the universal vote and the secret ballot."

50 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

What power has the Reichstag, then, to embarrass the government? The tremendously important check, it would appear upon first consideration, of refusing to vote credits. This right, however, German jurists agree, does not mean the regular budget, but only extraordinary sources of new revenue, such as war-loans.

Here, again, the imperial constitution comes to the aid of the government. The disobliging house can be dissolved and a new one elected within sixty days. This happened in 1878, 1887, 1893, and 1906, and on each occasion the people repudiated their representatives and sanctioned the official proposals—not necessarily because they really favoured them, but seemingly because, in the kindergarten development of their political life, they were awed by the firm stand of the government.

Since Prussia is the dominating State in Germany, and Germany has been increasingly "Prussianised" since 1870, it is necessary to understand some peculiarities in the Prussian system of voting. The most burning political question in Prussian politics is franchise reform—a reform promised by the Kaiser in 1917, but which the Prussian leaders have contrived to postpone again in 1918.

A peculiar tribal system prevails in the election of members of the Prussian Landtag, the legislature of the kingdom of Prussia. Voters are divided into three classes, according to the amount of state taxes paid in each electoral district. These three classes choose the members of an electoral college, who then elect the members of the Landtag.

The result is that some two hundred and sixty thousand wealthy taxpayers elect one-third, eight hundred

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 51

and seventy thousand less wealthy taxpayers elect one-third, and the remaining six million five hundred thousand voters elect one-third. Then the first two groups, being for the most part Conservatives, combine to freeze out the representatives of the numerical majority. There are nearly four times as many Social Democrats as Conservatives in Prussia, but through the wondrous workings of the three-class system of voting, there are 212 Conservatives and only 6 Social Democrats in the legislature. An ingenious arrangement, to be sure, and a great testimonial to the hypnotic powers of the little circle of Prussian gods who magically persuade the masses that the form is the substance!

These Prussian gods secure further power unto themselves by reserving for the king the power to appoint the president of each of the twelve provinces into which Prussia is divided. Each province is further divided into two or more districts, thirty-five in all. At the head of each is a district president, also appointed by the crown. There is a further division into nearly five hundred *kreise*, or circles, each governed by a *landrat*, also appointed by the emperor-king.

Though these men govern well in perhaps the majority of cases, many of them are prone to the officiousness of a bureaucratic system. They and other officials often exert a pernicious influence, especially in the rural regions, by weeding out independent tendencies and bending the will of those under them to be subservient to absolute monarchical ideas. Life is made intolerable for the recalcitrant. From personal knowledge I could give a long list of cases of men and women who were hounded until some of them sought refuge across the seas.

52 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Descending through the system, the petty officiousness of the lower officials becomes a curse in the eyes of a man brought up under democratic institutions. Many positions in the police, the railway service, and the post-office are given by preference to non-commissioned officers—the notorious *unteroffiziere*—who transfer the browbeating tactics they employed for years upon fresh army recruits to the people of every-day life with whom they come in contact in their new positions; and they are by no means the only offenders.

Speaking generally, the individuals who form the German bureaucracy are cowed by those above them, and they all unite in cowing those outside the system. It is difficult for a private person to get redress in the case of abuse of authority by an official, unless the case is flagrant, inasmuch as the very men who pass judgment are part of the system and believe in upholding it.

That many Germans chafe under all this is true. Millions have sought freedom under other flags during the past fifty years. There are in America to-day any number of citizens of German blood who are as strongly opposed to Kaiserism as are other Americans. But it is equally true that the people of William II's empire, taken as a whole, acquiesce in the established system or even delight in it.

In all countries, to a greater or lesser extent, only the few care to assume chances in the matter of earning a living. The many prefer a sure thing. The imperial government and the various state governments of Germany can offer an assured livelihood to millions. The State owns, in some cases partly, and in others entirely, the railways, canals, telegraphs and telephones,

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 53

forests, coal-mines, iron-mines, steel works, tobacco and porcelain factories, banks, lotteries, medicinal baths and springs, breweries, and newspapers. In Prussia, for example, the State is the largest proprietor of mines and minerals. Thus millions of Germans who have passed the necessary examinations and secured a "sure thing," and millions of other Germans who hope to pass into the civil service, can be counted upon to support the existing form of government.

Through the scientific exploitation of human vanity, the government exercises another form of control over its servants of various degrees, including professors, scientists, and business men.

Some of the thousand differences between the United States and Germany may seem trivial; but they are worth considering by all who would understand the situation. The Germans, when addressing one another, use titles to an extreme which we should regard as belonging to the realm of comic opera. They have been reared to honour and love labels, and they devote themselves to the cult with amazing whole-heartedness.

One case, by no means exceptional, will illustrate the point. A few years before the war the draftsmen of the imperial navy-yard at Kiel became dissatisfied and demanded more pay. The government met the situation with a refusal to grant their monetary demands, but laid before them a compensatory programme of social advancement. After a definite number of years a draftsman would be permitted to use the title *konstruktionsrat* (construction councillor). Another period of years, and he would become *geheimer konstruktionsrat* (privy construction councillor). Another period, and

54 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

he would be a *wirklich geheimer konstruktionsrat* (genuinely privy construction councillor). In addressing him you say "Herr Wirklich—" and all the rest of it, right through to the end, and you put the same ponderous mass on the envelope of the letter you write him.

He delights in all this, for the title marks his progress on the social ladder. He offers up thanks to a benevolent government.

The title custom has its brighter side, to be sure, for the visiting American. When he meets a German, the mere form of introduction will usually afford an amount of information as to the nature of the man's business, which the most astute insurance-agent in our own country could not hope to get so promptly. The system furthermore saves one the trouble of speculating, during dinner, upon the probable occupation of the bald-headed gentleman on one's right, or the tall, intellectual-looking personage opposite. The "who's who" introduction eliminates all that.

But our happy American way of looking upon foreign customs from the humorous side may sometimes lead us into serious trouble, if we do not go to the root of things. The title system is no laughing matter, for it is one of the powerful bonds that welds the German people to the German government. And because the divine right speeches of the Kaiser sound like excerpts from a joke-book to you, and because you would not care to live under his law, it does not follow that most of his subjects are beginning to feel the same way.

It would be a mistake to think that a German can cite no solid arguments in favour of his system of gov-

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 55

ernment, judged by the results accomplished under it. He will tell you that his system prevents a majority party playing politics for the spoils of office, and that "graft" in public expenditures is practically eliminated. He can point with justifiable pride to the sane and business-like management of his cities under expert departmental heads, with mayors who are not elected for political reasons, but are appointed because they have made a professional study of the business of running a city.

If the ministerial heads of a bureaucracy are benevolent and endowed with wisdom, they can accomplish more than would usually be possible in a democracy with its present flaws. Since there is no "rule of the people" in Germany, there is little necessity for playing politics—except international—by those in the higher governing strata, which permits them to give their whole attention, with the most complete professional and expert advice, to the work of improving materially the whole nation. Their highly-organised, smoothly running system of government enables them to pass scientifically framed measures in regard to banking, manufacturing, and trade-measures conducive to the development of tremendous material power.

The leaders of the German states are not always *Simon Legrees*, lashing profits from their toiling subjects. Usually they are hard working men who advocate every reform but political ones. With respect to the last, however, their views accord with those of Frederick William IV, who was prone to talk of the "limited intelligence of the subject."

Unlike most other governments, the German government is not simply legislative, executive and judicial.

56 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

It is very much more. It is the supreme Board of Directors of the manifold businesses of the people and the Empire. The war is teaching us that the popular idea in democracies that there must be a broad gulf between economics and politics, must be relegated to antiquity by every nation that hopes to keep its head above water in the commercial struggle that is coming. The German Empire never developed this idea, but from the first closely co-ordinated economics and politics.

Banking, the foundation of modern business, has been given special attention by the German Government, which considers banking and commerce natural allies. The German banks enter actively and directly into trade. This they do for two reasons: First, to secure profitable investment for their own funds, and secondly, to increase national prosperity. German banks do not coldly rebuff a man with an inventive idea in need of capital.

Suppose, for example, that Herr Lehmann invents a new method of rubber manufacture. The mere fact that he may have no money doesn't make it necessary for him to spend years annexing some kind of "influence" or playing into the hands of a promoter who will gobble up most of the profits in return for financial backing. Herr Lehmann simply goes to a large bank, the Deutsche Bank, for example, and announces his business. He will then be taken to a private office where he will be questioned by a bank official. If there seems to be something in his project, he will be turned over to one of the bank's rubber specialists, probably a member of the Board of Directors. If the expert pronounces the project favourable, the bank agrees to form

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 57.

a company in partnership with Herr Lehmann, to the advantage of both.

Even though Herr Lehmann had sufficient money to develop his scheme, it would be better for him to form an alliance with the bank, because of its great power through its wide-spread branches of industry to get big orders immediately. Thus hand in hand, through the world, went the German manufacturer and the German bank—the one discovering opportunities, the other exploiting them.

The German banks are closely linked with one another, and all are in turn closely allied to the Reichsbank (Imperial Bank). Owing to its intimate relation with the Reichsbank, the German Government can thus bring its influence to bear upon the whole structure of German commerce and industry.

It is through the banking system that the Wilhelmstrasse plays *Finanzpolitik*, the policy of national and international politics which, backed up by the cannon, made the world tremble several times on the brink of war in advance of The Day. The building of the Baghdad Railway is a case in point.

The German Government is, in short, a gigantic Trust which seeks to increase Germany's prosperity at the expense of the rest of the world. Under our own system, which has bred individual liberty, government control has been kept in the background. Had our trusts an alliance with a business government developed for the benefit of the people we should have in America just what we need in the modern world of competitive "big business." As it was, they developed evils which led to the Sherman Anti-trust Act.

In Germany, where the degree of individual liberty

58 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

is little, and government control correspondingly great, the German syndicates have not been curbed by the State but taken into partnership with it to exploit the outside world for the benefit of Germany. Every attempt by these syndicates to control foreign markets has been welcomed in the Fatherland. One aim has been to regularise the prices of things at home with consequent steady work and contentment to the German people, and to accomplish just the opposite abroad by causing prices to fluctuate. The device by which this is accomplished, is "dumping," a device which Germany has practised most successfully upon Great Britain because of that nation's open-door trade policy. At first the British public would welcome the "dumped" goods because they could be bought more cheaply than those of their own manufacture. The profits at home would enable the Germans to sell cheaply among the economic enemy until the British manufacturer was financially killed. Then the Germans would gradually increase the prices until the British consumer was paying as much, if not more, than he did originally, with the added disadvantage of the throwing out of employment of British workmen. Should some British manufacturer, tempted by the restored price, attempt to start up the business again, the Germans would "dump" once more and knock him out before he could get on his feet.

These practical aspects of the German Government have securely entrenched it in the hearts of the people, who take kindly to a system which does something for them in "doing" the rest of the world. German professors endeavour to imbue the people, unto the humblest, with the spirit of *Der Staat bist du*. (You are the State.) In the fourth year of the war, the prominent

HOW THE GERMANS ARE GOVERNED 59

Socialist, Dr. Paul Lensch, advocating a continuance of the system on the ground of practical economics which benefits the whole country, wrote:

"The fight for the world market and the money market was conducted more and more with the resources of the organised power of the State. German diplomacy was at every moment at the service of German finance, and this help was all the more powerful the greater became the power of the State which stood behind German diplomacy. A strong navy and a ready army in the background were a precious support in the fight for the world market and for the division of the still 'unowned' remains of the earth's surface."

There are some people in England and the United States who maintain that we have no right to interfere with the domestic affairs of another country. Ordinarily, we should not have. But when millions of industrially-efficient human ants, in blind obedience, unquestionably support a set of unscrupulously ambitious leaders, it is our duty to interfere in self-defense.

While we may generously admire much of what the system has accomplished materially for Germany, and at the same time merely shrug our shoulders if it has made the German a machine cog instead of an individual, we can no longer remain indifferent if the machine cog is part of a weapon aimed at our destruction.

Such will be the rôle of the German citizen until the Imperial Constitution is so completely altered that even Bismarck would not recognise it. Under it all German soldiers take an oath of fidelity to the Kaiser, and they have been reared from babyhood, not only to

60 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

obey him, but to revere him. The Constitution gives him, furthermore, *the sole power to make peace*. But we say that it is useless to make peace with *him*. So it is.

CHAPTER III

THE PHONOGRAPH MAN

AMONG Germany's scientific accomplishments during the war is the "Phonograph Man." Wherever I went my ears were assailed by the same stock ideas reeled off in the same words and accompanied by the same gestures. It was as if Germans had been provided with an assortment of carefully-censored records and were incapable of doing anything except repeat them.

I could detect changes in some quarters after the first year and a half of the war, but up to that time, if I asked a Prussian what he thought of things, his machinery would begin to purr and presently he would emit a raucous, "We Germans fear nothing." South in Bavaria, I always got the whole Bismarckian "tag," perhaps because King Ludwig had repeated it for the Press and the post-card makers of German war heroes, "We Germans fear God, but nothing else in the world."

Under peculiar circumstances I had a conversation with Herr Ulrich, a promoter of the Deutsche Bank's oil interests in Roumania, when we happened to travel together in February, 1915, from Budapest to Bucharest. Owing to the impressive nature of our meeting and to the fact that after I arrived in Roumania I completed my diary of the journey, I can accurately reproduce the conversation, which, in view of subsequent events, is enlightening.

62 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

The night before I met Herr Ulrich I was told by a reliable and well-informed friend in Budapest that I should get out of the country if possible. The "if possible" part of his remark was not at all reassuring.

It so happens that in the first autumn of the war, while absurd and dangerous ideas were being fed to the British public to the effect that food shortage was causing bread riots in Berlin, and that the military losses were so enormous that old men and boys were being dragooned to the colours, I wrote a series of ten articles for the London *Daily Mail*, recording the simple truth about conditions in Germany. This was so complimentary to German strength and efficiency that the *Cologne Gazette* and other German newspapers "featured" the articles in reproduction together with praise for the fairness of the anonymous writer.

Unfortunately for him, however, the idea dawned in the brain of some German official in the Foreign News-Sifting Department in the Wilhelmstrasse, 76, that these articles were "featured" in London not to praise Germany, but to wake up England to the effort necessary to win. Consequently, a new "official attitude"—and the Press of the Central Powers was informed "that the writer's knowledge of Germany was sufficiently accurate to make it desirable that he be restrained from further activities if caught." In fact, one of the Budapest papers suggested that he be shot.

Under my own name, I had written an article about Alsace-Lorraine for America similar to one I had written in my series in London anonymously. This, I was told, was a dangerous link against me, which was still being investigated.

The tightening frontier regulations were still loose compared with their later development to the acid bath stage. At seven o'clock that memorable February evening, I decided to make a dash from Budapest and, for excellent personal reasons, decided to cross the most distant frontier, namely, that of Roumania. So, after acquainting my hotel management with the information that I was going to Vienna on the nine-thirty train, I took the nine-thirty-five train in the opposite direction back eastward across the plain of Hungary.

I somehow felt lonesome for a friend as I sat in my sleeping compartment, so I pressed a friendly button which resulted in a knock at the door, which was opened to reveal the amiable countenance of the conductor, who, under the European *wagon-lits* system, collects tickets, makes and unmakes beds, dispenses drinks, and in his spare time receives tips. I ordered and took the occasion to give him a noticeably large one—though not large enough to attract undue attention—along with the casual information that I was an American bound for a short business-trip to Roumania.

Next morning the train stopped suddenly. When I looked out the window I saw that we were on the broad cattle plain with no station in sight. I suspected the reason for the stop, which caused me to dress quickly. The door opened to admit two Hungarian gendarmes, complete in uniform of green, but with feathers, the usual sabre on the left side, revolver on the right hip, and bayoneted rifle slung over the shoulder completing the travelling arsenals effect.

As an introduction to conversation, they twirled their moustaches after immemorial custom, and asked me for my papers. These seemed all right, and they

64 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

were about to pass on to inspect other passengers when they began to debate the probability of me being an Englishman and the advisability of taking me off the train for examination by superior officers—something I was anxious to avoid. Then came the grain of sand that turned the scales, in the person of the factotum conductor who broke into their conversation about me with the assurance that he knew me, and that I was all right. Thus had my investment of the night before blessed me a thousandfold.

The train rolled on, and I stepped back on the rear platform to readjust my nerves in the fresh air. An intellectual, neatly-dressed German of middle age who was standing there, looked me over deliberately from head to foot and then introduced conversation in the interesting, if somewhat abrupt manner of: "I do not like you." And although clearly a German, he made the remark in excellent English.

I apologised for my personal appearance, whereupon he replied, "It is not entirely that—only so far as it shows that you are American. I hate you, because I hate America," he continued rather frankly.

Under ordinary circumstances, bitter language might have gushed on both sides; but in my dread of the frontier ordeal before me that night I found the stranger's frankness such an antidote that I forgot my troubles and liked him. I even invited him to be my travelling companion which he became more affable toward me personally while he explained the war.

He showed renewed interest when I confessed to him that I was an American journalist. He returned me information that he was Herr Ulrich, prominent in the management of oil interests backed by the Deutsche

Bank. He insisted that his war-opinions were those of tens of millions of his countrymen. I soon saw that he was right, and all day long I got government records from the Phonograph Man.

Herr Ulrich, gazing out at the train window, began a record which was then almost new, but rapidly becoming popular. "Belgium," he said, "has cost a lot of money and a lot of blood. Indeed, she has cost so much money and so much blood that we can not ever consent to give her up.

"By analogy and reasoning," I reflected,—but, mindful of the front kept my reflections to myself,—"a burglar who recovers his hard knocks in the practice of his profession is entitled to compensation from the skilled members of the home which he had burglarized.

Besides, at the end it will not be so bad for the Belgians; for we Germans can make many improvements there," he continued.

I asked Herr Ulrich if he was certain of victory.

"In from three to six months," he replied.

"What about England?" I enquired. "They have a stout army yet to go into the field."

"That's English bluff," said Ulrich. "We know for all their drumming and advertising, Kitchener can not get men, and the English won't tolerate conscription. They could not get the men voluntarily, and now it is too late to get them in any other way. Suppose even that they could get men! What of their officers? We know how long it takes to train an officer. They won't. Furthermore, they would have no equipment for their men, and if they had, where are their *Kasernen* (barracks)? It has taken us years to develop

66 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

all these. But why discuss such matters?—since England can not get men."

After these observations, he settled back in the corner of his compartment, where I joined him, extracted a leather case of cigars from his pocket, selected one, folded the case and put it back. Between puffs, he remarked with satisfaction: "Besides, the English do not know what we have in hand. There are some colossal surprises. *Kolossal!*"

This, of course, switched the conversation to the submarine blockade which had just been inaugurated—Germany's newest and greatest fetish since her armies dug into position-warfare—worshipped with overweening pride by Germans, and something like a genial envy by Austrians. At that stage of the war it appeared to me that even the phonograph men took pride in trying to invent obvious exaggerations about the effects of the submarine warfare. It was the great "surprise"—the overwhelming and unanswerable naval argument which the Germans had kept up their sleeves.

"England has boasted that she is mistress of the seas. We Germans do not boast. We quietly prepare and unexpectedly strike. England, Mistress of the Seas!" he scoffed. "Why, we have bottled up her navy with our submarines, blockaded her ports, and are fast causing her flag to disappear from every ocean."

This little speech, with variations, made a popular record which all Germans were playing whose easily recognised "tag" was, "The English flags have disappeared from the seas." No collection of government-canned conversation was complete without it.

After luncheon, we began to discuss France, and then Herr Ulrich showed unconsciously how hopelessly in-

consistent is the phonographic conception of the world at war. Before luncheon he had told me that Kitchener could not scrape more than a million men by any means; now he asserted that the French had been ready to make peace some months ago but that England had threatened to bombard her ports if she did. The French were fighting bravely—so much he was willing to admit—but, poor devils! they had no choice.

"The real secret of France's failure to make peace," he gravely assured me, "was that all along behind the French front are drawn up lines of English troops, whose presence is a constant threat to the French if they should attempt to give way."

It is clear, of course, that Herr Ulrich had got two records mixed, somehow, because the authorities of the Press Bureau who originate all these records, would not have been quite so inconsistent.

Nevertheless, what he had said about France continuing the war on England's account, absurd and trivial as it may seem, was part of that famous record, labelled, "England will fight to the last Frenchman," a record which echoed across the lines through bleeding France where it was played in variant keys by Bolo and the other traitors who accepted the gold that pays the invisible army of the Fatherland.

I was wondering how soon the American end of the blockade business would creep into the conversation. It came in the late afternoon, after we had watched the castellated hill near Segesvar pass slowly from sight amid the windings of the train.

"A new kind of war has made a new kind of law," Herr Ulrich began. He had just found the "tag" in

68 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

a copy of the Vienna *Reichspost* and was adding it to his collection.

"Germany gave fair warning," he continued. "No other nation would have done that. Therefore, no one can complain. As for America, if she wants to avoid trouble, she need only keep her ships out of European waters. As for her citizens, they have no legitimate reason to be travelling in Europe. Europe is at war. Besides, this war is tremendously profitable to America."

Ah, how many times had I already heard this last record! How many times was I still to hear it! I forgot the frontier troubles and waxed sarcastic. "Sure!" I observed. "That is why America started the war!"

But sarcasm is buttoned foil to the impervious German. Herr Ulrich merely stared compassionately.

"What would you do if we sank one of your ships?" he demanded.

"Ask for compensation," I replied.

"But suppose we sank the American crew?" he enquired.

"Well, I suppose we should have to——"

"Have to fight us? Well, the more enemies, the more glory."

Herr Ulrich positively swelled with pride, as he got off this ancient "tag" of the first August of the war.

"All the same, I will tell you why you will not fight. You see, I know your country just as I know England. I have even had the pleasure of visiting your ship-yards. Did you ever go aboard one of your American submarines and inspect it thoroughly?"

I confessed that my pre-war education had been neglected in that line. I could only drag up the historical

bit of information that the submarine was an American invention.

Herr Ulrich appeared to overlook the second part of my answer. "Just think! you are an American, I am a German; and I have been on one of your submarines, and you have not. We Germans know England better than the English, Russia better than the Russians; and certainly we know Russia better than her allies know her. In Bucharest, to-morrow, where I attend a *very* important meeting at our Legation, I expect to learn new comforting things about Russia. I smile when I read English, French and American papers which tell of how the great 'steam-roller' from the East will crush us. You are all ignorant of Russia. You are especially ignorant in America where size and bulk are the basis of all your judgment. The Russian Empire is vast on the map, and Russia, has a hundred and seventy millions; therefore, you in your ignorance believe Russia correspondingly powerful. We, in our intelligence, know that Russia is *a colossus stuffed with straw*, as von Ehrenthals long ago remarked.

"As for France, at the outbreak of war, our maps of that country were more up-to-date than those of the French. So, too, do we know America better than do the Americans. That is why I can so calmly assure you that you will not fight. You *cannot* fight, for your country is composed of *not enough soldiers and of too many Germans.*"

And Herr Ulrich's trace of a smile seemed to betoken compassion for a helpless citizen of a helpless republic.

The train curved sharply; and through the carriage window we saw against the cold winter sunset a hill

70 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

rise abruptly from the plain,—a hill topped with old walls of yellowish-grey and back of it a higher pine-clad hill which frowned like a sentinel across the track. Cradled amid these slopes was Brasso—or Kronstadt, as the Germans call it,—but which the Hungarians refuse to call it. It is the last important town of Hungary.

Herr Ulrich began to collect his baggage.

"You would do much better to stop off at Kronstadt," he said. "You will find accommodations greatly superior to those at Predial. Moreover, there are several thousand good old German inhabitants of the city, and they create an atmosphere which improves these stupid Hungarian towns. At Predial you will find nothing but Hungarian-Roumanian mountaineers—disagreeable folks, both of them."

Although he was speaking English, I felt his remarks to be rather tactless in view of the fact that a Hungarian who had passed back and forth in the corridor several times during the afternoon, had now paused outside our compartment. Perhaps he did not understand English, but his appearance bespoke an education which made me regret my German companion's disparagement of a country which I had often found full of charm.

I knew the region even more intimately than did Herr Ulrich. I had tramped it all in every direction from Brasso, and I knew the trails through the mountain passes leading into Roumania eighteen miles ahead so thoroughly, that, in my anxiety, now that the ordeal of crossing the frontier was at hand, I seriously thought of getting off at Brasso and taking my chances on foot. I reflected, however, that it was *Germany* who was investigating me, and that her co-ordination with

distant Hungarian-Roumanian frontiers might be favourably loose; so I resolved to stick to the train and "Smile, smile, smile."

I stepped on to the platform, and chatted with Herr Ulrich a few moments. Then, when I turned back, I saw a man who clearly recognised me jump down to meet me. He smiled pleasantly and held out his hand. He was an officer of the border patrol, with whom I had become friendly in days gone by. We were glad to see each other again, and talked like long-lost brothers while the train, with two engines, twisted up the Predial Pass,—the pass over which Falkenhayn later forced his way down to the oil fields of Roumania.

As a matter of form, my friend told that he would look at my passport. He did so, and returned it to me.

"I wonder if you could do something for me at the American Legation in Bucharest?" he asked.

I told him that I should be very glad to, if it were something quite in order.

He explained that he would like the investigation of a dear friend who was a prisoner in Serbia. He said that he had written several times to the Legation, but the matter was still pending. I promptly assured him that I would give the affair my attention immediately upon my arrival at Bucharest. Therefore, the quicker I got there, the better for both of us. He then wrote down his friend's name and some data concerning him.

I put this carefully in my pocket, then casually remarked, "I hope, in their frontier zeal, your examining officer will not insist on keeping this."

He smiled. "I will see that you are quickly transported across the frontier," he said. "You will remem-

72 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

ber," he continued, "that half of the station at Predial is in Hungary and half in Roumania."

He then passed along to continue his inspection of the train.

The night now gathering in the valleys was climbing slowly to the mountain tops, while on the rough highway that paralleled the track, long lines of bullock-carts were blending with the shadows—carts drawn up to the frontier to bring back the goods smuggled from the Roumanian side.

When my officer friend returned from his inspection of the train he told me that if I would give him my passport he would have it quickly viséed, would see that my baggage was promptly examined and would personally conduct me to the Roumanian half of the station.

The train stopped. I steeled myself for the ordeal which did not come; for my friend kept his word, and within three minutes I stood alone, across the barrier, in Roumania. Of course he could only take me out of Hungary, after which I had to undergo the Roumanian examination. But my heart was light as I looked back at the enemy's side, where a concourse of Germans, Austrians, Hungarians and Roumanians were in the throes of rigorous investigation.

The first person I encountered in the Predial-Bucharest express next morning, was Herr Ulrich, whose appearance suggested a restless night.

"My meeting with you yesterday," he began abruptly, "proved most unfortunate. Indeed, it nearly wrecked my *very* important meeting at our Legation in Bucharest. You got me into trouble."

Before I could express solicitude and ask him how

on earth I could have got him into trouble, he snapped:

"Did you have great difficulties at the frontier?"

My innocent reply that I had found officialdom most delightful, seemed to increase his anger.

"Do you remember that we spoke English all day yesterday?" he blurted out.

I did.

"Do you remember that damned Hungarian? — (He pronounced it dam—ned, with two syllables, as in Shakespeare courses at college.) "The one standing outside the door when we neared Kronstadt?"

I remembered the gentleman.

"He was a detective!" cried Herr Ulrich. "A stupid Hungarian detective. Because we talked English, his suspicions were aroused; and, do you know—it was I whom he suspected! You are an American, virtually an enemy; I am a German and an ally. Yet I was held, and you went free!"

"It does seem rather weird!" I agreed sympathetically.

"Perhaps from this you may better realise the greatness of Germany. We have to supply the brains for Austria-Hungary as well as for ourselves——"

Herr Ulrich paused in his tirade to get his breath, which afforded me an opportunity to ask: "But you had papers, did you not, to verify yourself? Your trouble must have been of very brief duration!"

"I did have papers," he began with vigour, "and my trouble was *not* of brief duration.

"When I saw that they meant business, I told them they could telegraph to Berlin and verify me. They said that, owing to military operations, the telegraph lines would be closed for non-essential messages for

74 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

forty-eight hours, and that they would write. I was filled with horror at the thought their insanity might prevent me reaching Bucharest in time. Then I thought of you!"

I expressed my appreciation by bowing slightly.

"What about that American who was with me?" I asked them. "Why haven't you arrested him? They told me that you were in excellent standing with the frontier police, as witnessed by the detective when we got off the train at Kronstadt. They insisted further that the detective was excellent in his profession, and that your accent clearly showed you were an American, but that my command of English was perfect, and my accent unmistakably English."

At which Herr Ulrich paused, his anger seeming to evaporate as he let his thoughts linger over this Hungarian tribute to his mastery of a foreign tongue. "My English is very good, don't you think so?" he interpolated.

I could honestly agree that it was flawless.

"But I am persistent. Persistency is a German trait," he explained. "I pressed the matter of the importance of my business, and when I seemed to be winning, I was struck with a brilliant idea and made use of the fact that you were in the good graces of the frontier guards. Therefore I stretched a point upon our short acquaintance and insisted that I was a very good friend of yours, and that inasmuch as you were declared all right, I must be all right. This may seem to you an absurd argument for me to introduce, but one is likely to do anything when desperate. At seven o'clock they told me I could go to my hotel. I did so and tried to eat, but the horrible thought that I might

miss the Legation meeting took away my appetite. I tried to read, but my eyes wandered from the pages. Then I went to bed, but could not sleep. I turned and tossed all night. At five I began to dress, feeling very nervous at the thought that the train on which I should ride would be leaving at six-forty. There was a knock on my door, and the *portier* entered with an official message. I tore it open, and to my joy saw that it was the permission to depart. The *portier* told me that it had been given him at eleven the night before with instructions to deliver it at five-thirty in the morning. However, 'All's Well that Ends Well!' And I am glad to be here. But I have had little rest since we parted back in Kronstadt."

Whereupon Herr Ulrich settled back in the cushions and sighed again.

I might have ventured my opinion that these very astute Hungarians had resolved to make him uncomfortable—in order to get even with him for his complimentary remarks to me in the train about everything Hungarian. I refrained from doing so, however, since I felt that it might temporarily blunt his frank expressions of his opinions of other countries, including my own.

He became interested again after the train had completed the grinding journey down the mountains and came in sight of the towering steel skeletons that marked the oil fields of the plain.

"We Germans have great interests here," he began, then jumped to the opposite window to watch a freight train pass.

"Do you see those?" he cried, excitedly. "They are all German cars, and they are running on Roumanian

76 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

tracks," he said in a tone which clearly showed a return to the national pride form of the day before. "We have completed a commercial arrangement in which Roumania has agreed to sell us grain if we supply the cars to haul it."

And I might have added that Roumania was making them pay through the nose for what they got.

"Soon we shall arrive in Bucharest," he began after a long pause, "where we part, and I have been reflecting that I should express myself frankly to you. I gave you some German war opinions yesterday. They are not confidential, and they are not simply mine; but again I repeat they are the opinions of millions of my fellow-countrymen. I wish to add something, for perhaps there is still time for you and other American journalists who have come to Germany, to save your country. As I have already told you, we have some colossal surprises. Why, do you know that after the war future generations will see in London the greatest monument of history—a monument to German science and German victory?"

"Will it be more colossal than the National Denkmal on the Rhine, or the mammoth statue of Bismarck in Hamburg?" I innocently asked.

"It will be different," Herr Ulrich explained patiently and gently. "It will be whole districts of London rebuilt. Think of the effect on future generations of Englishmen when they visit London and ask why some parts of the city are so much more beautiful and better constructed than the rest. They will be told that this is because Germans rebuilt the parts which their Zeppelins destroyed as a punishment during the Great War. The English have been deluded. Perhaps even

before the war is over, they may realise that and rise in rebellious anger against the man who tricked them,—Sir Edward Grey.”

By this time, I was staring in blank amazement at the man, which he probably mistook for wonderment and admiration on my part for Germany's power as revealed by him. So in deadly earnest he continued:

“But the English will have to rise quickly, or they will be too late to save themselves. You remember I told you yesterday that we shall win the war in from three to six months. We are certain to do it. All Europe will lie prostrate at our feet—and Egypt too. Then what shall we do?”

“Introduce German customs after the manner of conquerors,” I suggested. “Perhaps you will improve the Pyramid of Cheops with a little summit terrace, beer garden, and observation tower?”

Herr Ulrich brushed this aside with the cutting remark that it was a German custom to respect and leave unaltered the historic treasures of the enemy. “I fear you do not perceive the natural sequence of events in this war,” he added somewhat impatiently. “Can you not see that after we have conquered Europe, we Germans shall be in a position to demand full indemnity from America for the damage she has caused us by her unneutral furnishing of our enemies with munitions of war? That is what I mean when I say that you American journalists should inform your readers and tell them that the sooner they stop this unneutral practice, the more trouble they will save themselves when we are free to take up their case.”

We rose now to gather our baggage; for the brakes were on for Bucharest. As we parted on the platform

78 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

to go to different hotels, Herr Ulrich bade me good-bye with: "Remember, we are disappointed in America. We hate her because we have reason to hate her. Do your duty while there is still time. Tell her of Germany's power and warn her. Warn her!"

Twenty months had passed since that parting in Bucharest in the first February of the war, an occasion when I fully believed that my war-time trips to see Germany first-hand were over. But the fortunes of war gave me a chance to reshuffle the cards—and, believing that I had fixed things, I steeled myself for yet another frontier, this time the Dutch-German, in December, 1915. But things were only partly fixed. Though I was not arrested, I could not get out of Germany for nearly a year. Then I managed to do so in a story already told.*

Before leaving, my curiosity overcame my prudence, and I resolved to seek out Herr Ulrich to ascertain his latest war convictions. So I telephoned him and arranged an appointment.

Twenty months after our parting in Bucharest, I stood outside his office door, twenty months after he had told me to warn my country that the war would be over in from three to six. The door opened, and I stood before Herr Ulrich, oil promoter and partner in enterprise of the Deutsche Bank. I don't know why my gaze became riveted on two books upon his desk. A matter of no consequence, these books—one might feel! I am not so sure. I saw that one was a Russian grammar, the other a simple Russian reader. Herr Ulrich followed my gaze and explained:

* "The Land of Deepening Shadow"—Chapter XXVII.

"I am a broad-minded man, and having long ago perfected myself in English and French, I have just now taken up the study of Russian as an intellectual diversion. I believe that we Germans are going to pay much more attention to the study of Russian in our schools in the future."

"For intellectual diversion!" I ventured.

"For purposes of business," Herr Ulrich corrected simply.

There was a pause as I grappled for a thread to link us with the past. Herr Ulrich sighed.

"When is this terrible war going to end?" he asked wearily.

Apparently all his old phonograph records had been scrapped. "We Germans want what we always wanted: to live in peace and to let other nations live in peace. Do you never feel that America will neglect an opportunity seldom offered to any nation if she does not act soon?"

I jacked myself up for another indemnity, but I was wrong.

"Europe is torn against itself," said Herr Ulrich. "Our enemies should see that they can never defeat us; but, on the other hand, they are so many that it is difficult for us to conquer them all. There are some people in England who would be willing to talk peace just as we Germans would; but perhaps they, like us, see no way to bring the matter to a head. That is America's opportunity—her golden opportunity for humanity."

War is the sternest teacher in the world. To be sure, tens of millions of Germans continue to play govern-

80 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

ment records like phonograph men; but in spite of this, a few Germans have begun to question,—generally to themselves, because it is safer so.

Will this questioning attitude increase until some day, as the citizens of Paris marched down the Boulevard St. Germain to storm the Bastille, the citizens of Berlin will march up Unter den Linden to wreck the Idea Factory in the Wilhelmstrasse?

Will the German people overthrow their rulers?

CHAPTER IV

SMOKE-CLOUDS OF DEMOCRACY

IN a war of endurance, each side yearns for revolutions among its enemies.

The overthrow of Czardom in the spring of 1917 by the people of Russia was hailed through wide circles among the Allies as the forerunner of the overthrow of Kaiserism by the people of Germany and Austria-Hungary. This idea was receiving such increasingly wide credence in England that it impelled me to write an article for the *Daily Mail* in April, 1917, entitled, "Revolutionary Rot about Germany" in which I set down some excellent reasons why there was no probability of the Hohenzollerns going the way of the Romanoffs for a considerable time.

About ten o'clock on the morning of publication, the office boy announced, "A gentleman, sir, with most urgent business." I asked the messenger to find out what the urgent business was; whereupon he came back with the reply that it concerned revolution in Germany and could not wait. "Revolution in Germany" being classed in the "urgent business" column, the stranger was promptly admitted. He entered, breathing hard under the excitement of what he had to deliver.

"I am a frank man," he began, "and I know that you will not take my criticism unkindly. Since I read your article at breakfast, I have been able to think of

82 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

nothing else. I believe that such an article is exceedingly detrimental."

"To which side?" I asked.

"To our side—to England, of course. You are a pessimist and associated with a pessimistic lot of newspapers; and pessimism depresses people."

"On the contrary," I replied, "I am very optimistic about beating Germany if we go at it in the right way—which is not the way of the ostrich." Then I added that the majority of his countrymen impressed me with the fact that there were no people on earth who more desired hard, cold facts and were willing to face them.

"But about this German revolution," he said. "You believe that the German people will not revolt this year? Well, I do! All the signs point to it."

When I asked him what these signs were, he cited some recent Reichstag speeches of Social Democrats which had been printed in London papers.

I admitted that these speeches, *taken in themselves*, did look very comforting from our point of view—then I added that fractional truth could be misleading; that the Germans had specialised in it, and the Allies had by no means entirely avoided it.

The trouble with this man was that he was judging enemy institutions by those that he knew. He did not understand how the Germans were governed and the exact status of the Reichstag, or Imperial Debating Society, in that scheme of Government. He was, in short, unmindful of the thousand differences!

He was especially unmindful of the fact—a fact that has continued to exist through four years of war, that ever since the people of Prussia and other German

states allowed themselves to be tricked by promises in 1848 when they had victory in their grasp, democracy has always given way to militarism when a test arose.

The unconsidered trifles of every-day life are symptomatic of the texture of a nation.

One afternoon, in the third year of the war, while walking in Charlottenburg, I noticed a soldier ahead of me with one arm missing from the shoulder and the other done up in a sling. A Red Cross nurse walked by his side, for he was clearly still weak and only indulging in a short respite from the hospital. They paused, while she put a cigar in his mouth and lighted it.

They had again resumed their walk when I noticed a captain striding toward us. I felt sorry for the man ahead and was just reflecting upon the opportunity which an officer would now have to show by a kindly nod his appreciation of a soldier's sacrifice. I saw something quite the contrary. When abreast of the man, the captain whirled on him with an oath, snarling that he was violating a regulation of the German army.

Technically, the officer was correct in his charge; for there is a regulation which commands privates to remove from their mouths that which they are smoking when they are passing an officer. One might suppose, however, that an armless man should be a logical exception to the rule; but such a one would not be endowed with the pigeon-hole regulation mind which the German system tends to develop.

After the browbeating, the man and the officer continued their respective ways. Before thirty paces, however, the rage of the latter, seething for an outlet, caused him to turn back sharply to overtake his victim, whom, after passing, he whirled to face. The victim

84 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

stopped abruptly; his heels clicked sharply together, his body became rigid, head up, eyes straight ahead, while from his lips came the mechanical "*Zu Befehl, Herr Hauptmann*" (at your command, Mr. Captain). The captain, livid with rage, advanced without a word, struck the cigar from the man's mouth, then passed on. The honour of the army had been upheld!

I learned the names of both and gave full details to a Social-Democratic member of the Reichstag who indignantly brought the matter to the attention of the Ministry of War with the demand that the officer be punished. Though the War Department, "deeply regretted the occurrence," it refused to censor the officer on the ground that German military efficiency depended in a great measure for its success upon unquestioning obedience of officers and men to regulations, which made it desirable not to encourage officers to make exceptions to general rules inasmuch as a rule would work nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand. Thus the incident closed.

But another street incident, this one in 1913, had momentous historical consequences. Late in the autumn of that year, the forty-second after the fortunes of war had transferred Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, a Prussian lieutenant, while marching his men through the Alsatian hamlet of Dettweiler, some five miles from Zabern, ran after a group of civilians who had laughed at Prussia's soldiery. Overtaking a solitary, panting straggler, a lame cobbler, the young officer slashed open the side of the man's head with his sabre.

The officer's name was Lieutenant von Forstner. Some weeks earlier he had created a storm of ill feeling by telling a recruit that he would pay him ten marks if

he stabbed a *wackes*—*wackes* being a slurring name applied to the Alsatians, and deeply resented by them. The citizens of Zabern protested through the proper municipal officials, but the protest only caused the soldiery to become the more domineering. Friction grew, the natives often laughed during the passing of troops, and Colonel von Reuter, contrary to law, treated the city as if it were in a state of siege.

Finally the colonel sent out a boy of nineteen, Lieutenant Schad, to make arrests. Schad did so, and promiscuously; apprehending, among others, a civilian judge and counsel just leaving court. The prisoners were forced into a coal-cellar, and left there overnight.

In Berlin the Reichstag boiled with indignation; the Social Democrats, in particular, clamoured for the arrest and punishment of the guilty officers; Germany's better side momentarily flashed clear and bright. Civil anger increased when General von Falkenhayn, Prussian minister of war, stepped before the Reichstag to defend and glorify every act of the military. The Crown Prince became the darling of militarism by his famous telegram:

"Nur fest drauf los!" (Now let them have it hot!)

Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg see-sawed before the Reichstag with the meaningless, hedging, Delphic platitudes of diplomacy; whereupon that body employed the new weapon—or rather toy—of censure granted it the preceding May, and passed an overwhelming vote of two hundred and ninety-three to fifty-four against him. Did that disturb him in the least? Not that anybody has ever been able to discover. He calmly told the Reichstag that he was responsible only to the

86 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Kaiser, and left for Donaueschingen to confer with his master.

The storm continued and to the outside world it appeared as if Prussian militarism might be overwhelmed and crushed by popular disapproval. The great court scene was set in Strassburg, with the judiciary ensconced behind a hedge of spiked helmets. The *leit-motif* of the drama was struck by the youthful Lieutenant Schad when he addressed the court as if it were an awkward squad in a barracks-yard.

Why is this incident of the period before the war important now? Because it raised in Germany a clear-cut issue between a militaristic and a civil state. The former won, the democratic ebullition cooled down; and thus, set in the affair of Zabern, the curtain was rung up on the first act of the gigantic world-struggle between autocracy and democracy.

In the following year came the war, which magnetised parties and people into the most complete unity ever achieved by a great nation, a happy, boastful unity of sweeping victories, heavy indemnities, and early peace to the united chorus of "Deutschland über alles." But in 1916, under the stress of war, cracks began to appear in the unity with which the government assiduously pours cement. Until then all parties had loyally supported the war policy of the government; but the unanimous support was slightly fractured when 18 members of the Social Democratic party withdrew from the 111 who comprised the party.

Thus of the 397 deputies of the Reichstag, only 18 (less than 5 per cent.) have arrayed themselves against the policy of a government in four years of a war which began with the assumption that Belgium was not a

country but a highway—a policy which has thrown treaties and agreements to the winds, dragged Belgians, French and Poles into slavery, sanctions the sinking of neutral vessels without warning—a policy which has forced the civilised world to band itself together like a sheriff's posse to hunt down a lunatic gunman.

The 18 protesters, who constitute the Social Democratic Minority party, which the reader must carefully distinguish from the 93 Social Democrats who constitute the regular, or Majority, party,—these 18, are now known in Germany as the U-Socialists, and they are as generally unpopular as the U-boats are popular. In the first case, the "U" stands for *unabhängiger* (independent); in the second case, it stands for *untersee* (under the sea).

The regular Social Democrats have thus far allowed themselves to be government-controlled; indeed, their "parliamentary actions" are often looked upon by the government as extremely useful for export purposes. They are best described as "tame" Socialists.

It is the speeches of the Social Democratic Minority, together with an occasional one from the Social Democratic Majority, which make such pleasant reading for Germany's enemies. More people read these speeches in England or in France or in the United States than in Germany, where for the most part they are made to empty benches, printed only in the Social Democratic newspapers and even there in unobtrusive Parliamentary type, without "feature" headings, since those must be reserved, as in all other German papers, for German victories.

Furthermore, they are seldom read by German soldiers, as the military scissors are extremely sharp in

88 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

deleting anything that may prove injurious to the helmeted mind.

German politics, in general, have developed during 1917 and 1918 three currents in the "German Revolution." Sometimes these are distinct and again they tend to merge. They are:

1. *Revolution*. This is the extreme desire violently to overthrow the existing form of government and establish a republic or a socialistic state. This current is still weak after four years of war.

2. *Constitutional Reform*—an attempt to achieve this has been spasmodically made by a few Reichstag members and newspapers, the most courageous and intelligent leader being Theodor Wolff, editor of the sane and radical *Berliner Tageblatt*, a financially powerful organ whose liberal utterances cause it to be frequently *strafed* by the military commandant of the Mark of Brandenburg. Wolff is a Jew, with ten years' journalistic experience in Paris.

Reforms which have been advocated for years are: first, the abolition of the three-class system of voting in Prussia—a reform promised by the Kaiser in 1917 and successfully fought off by the Junkers in 1918. They know that a "one-man-one-vote" system would mark the beginning of the end of German feudalism.

The second reform advocated was the redistribution of the Reichstag districts which, constituted in 1871, sacrifices the populous industrial cities, with their large Social Democratic vote, to the more reactionary agricultural districts.

The third reform is that of ministerial responsibility to the Reichstag, i.e., a building up of the triangle based upon the people with the Chancellor at the apex instead

of the Chancellor and ministers constituting a cabinet of super-Germans who derived their power from the clouds through the medium of the Kaiser.

3. *Peace Terms.* This diverse current did not exist in those happy months for Germany when she was winning hands down. It developed chiefly through the differences of opinion among Germans regarding how much they could get from their enemies and how great sacrifices they were willing to make in the getting.

Germany's enemies frequently fall into the error of failing to distinguish these three currents. Some day the dislodging hammer blows of the Allied armies and blockaders may cause these three disturbing currents to rise and rush together into a resistless torrent which will sweep away the whole structure of autocratic feudal bureaucracy, even as the force of the sun loosens in the spring the snows that cling to the mountain sides, causing little streams to swell together into destructive torrents.

In its early stages, the Russian revolution produced fever-waves through Europe which increased the restlessness of the people of Germany and Austria-Hungary in their "struggle toward democracy." Indeed, had the Russian revolution been more ably managed, it is not unlikely that it would have caused an earthquake throughout Europe more far-reaching than that which radiated from France in 1848. Although Russia quickly became such an "awful example" that this has not happened, her negotiations with Germany have nevertheless given us a staggering example of what the German Government and the majority of the people

90 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

are out for and the duplicity lengths which they will go to attain it.

Three dates stand in bold relief in this German political calendar of double dealing. The significance of these dates should be understood and seared in the memory inasmuch as taken together they furnish unassailable proof that the German people and their chattering representatives in the Imperial Debating Society continue to be children politically. In a society of nations they form a creature of peril with the mind of a baby and the body of a brute.

This metaphor will be clear if we examine the relation to one another of the dates of July 19 and November 29, 1917, and March 4, 1918. The first we shall designate Reichstag Peace Resolution Day; the second, Reichstag "Spoof Day," and the third, Russian Peace Day.

Reduced to simplest form the Reichstag Peace Resolution simply means that the overwhelming majority of the representatives of the German people went on record to the world in favour of peace without annexations. Those who voted thus constitute what is called in German political parlance the Reichstag Majority—which we must carefully distinguish from the Social Democratic Majority.

Herr Scheidemann, Leader of the Social Democratic Majority, said—"The Reichstag with its peace programme has invaded the foreign policy of the Empire and brought about a complete defeat of the annexationists."

This sentiment echoed across the North Sea into England, and still echoing, crossed the Atlantic to act as a soporific on American war activity. In England

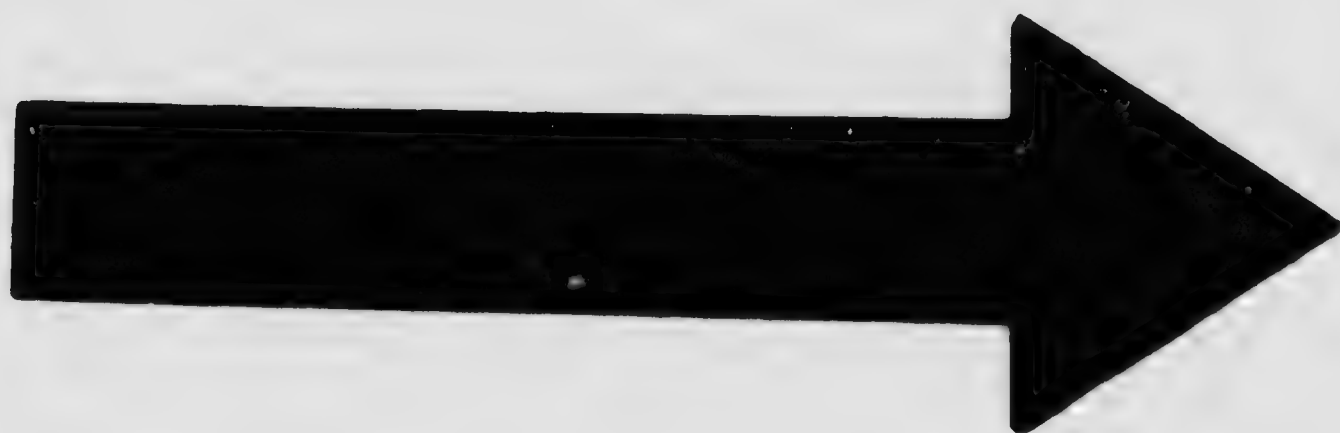
a considerable portion of the Press, in good sporting spirit, hailed the advent of the "German people's direction of their own affairs," while the "Trust Willy" Pacifists, both amateur and professional, joyfully piped, "I told you so!"

All through the lead-hued, muddled summer of 1917, Britain's soldiers gamely wallowed and bit their way slowly into the higher German positions in France and Flanders. The combined offensive in which Russia, France and Italy would join with them had stagnated everywhere else for reasons more politic than military.

Those who assert that England is saving herself in this war as in other wars—and I still find them in America in the summer of 1918—should in that fairness which is the ideal we should always seek, realise and admit that in the extremely critical season of 1917, the *English* and the rest of the British Empire sustained enormous losses in an attempt to keep the war going offensively for the Allies, while America was preparing her army.

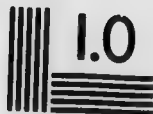
Although the military results through the summer were as discouraging to the Allies as they had been encouraging in 1916, a touching and beautiful hope took root and flourished among them that the Reichstag Peace Resolution was a clear indication that the German people, bent under war, would soon enable the Allies to draw the fangs of a menacing militarism.

What was happening in Germany? At the close of the summer Hindenburg and Ludendorff began to plan and rehearse sledgehammer offensives on the Western front for 1918. Now that Russia was dwindling to impotence, they and their military colleagues felt that all they needed was an extension of the lease



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



1.0

4.5

2.8

2.5

5.0

3.2

2.2

5.6

6.3

3.6

2.0

7.1

4.0



1.1

8.0

1.8

9.0

10.0

11.2

12.5

14.0

16.0



1.25



1.4



1.6



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

92 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

of German unity in order to win. They detested the democratic ebullition. They especially wished to head off any increase to the adherents of the Independent U-Socialists, the publication of whose peace terms, as stated by their leader, Herr Haase, had been banned throughout most of Germany including Berlin. Even the tamed Socialist *Vorwärts*, whose presses usually feed from the official hand, could not reproduce the resolution proposed by the Socialist Minority and read by Herr Haase, but merely contented itself with expressions of regret that a former colleague "has hopelessly run amuck."

These resolutions (of the Minority, remember) are:

"The Reichstag strives for a peace without annexations of any kind whatever, and without war indemnification—upon the basis of the right of the people to decide their own destinies. In particular it expects the restoration of Belgium and the repair of the wrong done to Belgium. The Reichstag demands the initiation of immediate peace negotiations upon the foundation of this programme. It demands an international agreement about general disarmament, freedom of international trade and intercourse, unrestricted international freedom of movement, an international agreement for the protection of workmen from exploitation, recognition of the equal rights of a State without regard to nationality, sex, race, language, and religion, protection of national minorities, and obligatory international arbitration for the settlement of all disputes.

The urgent preliminary condition for the achievement of peace and the carrying out of this peace programme is the immediate raising of the state of siege. Moreover, it is necessary to effect the complete democratisation of the Constitution and Administration of the

Empire and its several States, and this must end in the creation of a social Republic."

Not only might these resolutions of the 5 per cent. contaminate some of the good Germans, but it was disconcerting to the military managers of the German Empire while planning their giant offensive that the Reichstag was screeching and rocking in its political baby-carriage. Therefore, they decided to throw it a brightly-coloured ball to play with, although down in their hearts they would undoubtedly have preferred a bomb.

On November 2d, Count Hertling, like all his predecessors, had become Chancellor by the "exclusive grace" of the Kaiser. As he was the second Chancellor to be wished upon the Reichstag within a hundred days, the so-called Democratic Majority of that body, consisting approximately of four-fifths of its 397 members, "rebelled." It threatened to withhold its support from Hertling just as it had refused to work with Mark-Time Michaelis unless Hertling gave his deputyships in the chancellorship and Prussian ministry to "democrats."

Even Hindenburg went to Berlin to engage in the ensuing discussions. With Hertling he listened to the "democrats'" demands and although the offices for which they clamoured embody no real authority, a period of pretended negotiations ended in the magnanimous granting of "concessions."

All this was revealed to the world through the medium of a spectacular farce entitled "Democracy and Unity," which was staged for the edification of "democratic" Germany, and the deception of the outside

94 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

world. An act of boundless generosity on the part of Hohenzollern, Hindenburg, Hertling and Company, this admitting of the people's representatives in the Reichstag to a share in the government! No wonder the mere mortals in Germany gave way to emotional sentiment of thanksgiving, while the "Trust Willys" in England piped the more shrill.

I do not deny that the idea of a new civilian triumvirate looked very well from the distance as a check upon rampant militarism. But again I would remind the reader: "Prussia never yields; she only seems to yield." In addition to the fact that the triumvirate exercise power only by grace of the Kaiser, the records of the men who compose it are against them, from the democratic point of view. I have already discussed Hertling in this respect in Chapter II.

Herr von Peyer, vice-Chancellor, is a remarkably well-preserved man of 70 years, who devoted his early years to a study of theology but switched to law in his native Württemberg where he gained considerable reputation as a defender of criminals—a kind of experience which he should find exceedingly useful in his present position defending German policy among the nations. Peyer has made numerous Democratic speeches, but like most of his Social Democratic brethren, he has never failed to yield to Imperial Junkerdom on a showdown.

The third member of the triumvirate, Privy Councillor Friedburg, is vice-president of the Prussian ministry—(Count Hertling as Chancellor being President *ex officio*). He is 67 years of age, being three years younger than Peyer, and was a professor of political science at Halle University for a number of years.

Like Hertling, he has been an outspoken opponent of any parliamentary form of government.

Tracking down loopholes and flaws in Prussianised Germany's diplomatic dealing with her own people and foreign countries, I find a most pleasant and useful diversion. There is a further slight flaw in the Friedburg appointment:

In order to eliminate the last vestige of risk in admitting the Reichstag to any power through this "democratic" triumvirate, let it be noted that the rulers constitutionally subtracted him from the Reichstag in order to elevate him to the Bundesrat, or Federal Council, which, let me again remark, is the check upon the Reichstag and is the constitutional instrument appointed by the rulers of the several states, the Kaiser appointing for dominating Prussia.

And now for the climax in the colossal farce staged and managed by Hindenburg. What was the Reichstag's end of the bargain for receiving these "concessions"? It was nothing less than an agreement by the Democratic Majority to muzzle itself until the end of the war *on all questions connected with the conduct of the war*.

Furthermore, it was agreed that if the Socialists or other parties attempted to go outside the agreed programme, they were to be voted down until after the war.

These are the simple facts, and it is difficult for the outsider to understand the political credulity of the German people. They again congratulated themselves on their unity, while *Vorwärts*, the organ of "tame" Socialists, exultantly declared: "Germany has completed a revolution of her domestic institutions which

96 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

puts her on the same level as other peoples. By what right can the name of Democracy be denied to Germany?"

The 29th of November, so little understood, is of tremendous importance in the war as a whole. One of the reasons it attracted such slight attention was that the Cambrai and Italian battles were blocking the headings. The events of the 29th nullified the Reichstag Peace Resolution of the 19th of July of no indemnities and no annexations to the extent that the people's representatives in the Reichstag, keeping to their bargain of "Spoof Day," sat obediently mute while the military party in the spring of 1918 framed a peace with a Russia which was as helplessly breaking up as an ice-sheet after the winter—a peace which includes both indemnities and annexation.

The third date in the deceptive democracy series is March 4th, 1918, when negotiations in the East having been completed to the satisfaction of Germany, the Kaiser publicly affixed his seal of approval through the medium of a telegram to Hindenburg in which he said:

"With the signing of peace with Russia, almost four years of war on the Eastern front have finally reached a glorious conclusion. I feel deeply the need to express again to you, my dear Field Marshal, and to your faithful assistant, General Ludendorff, my own thanks and the thanks of the German people. By the Battle of Tannenberg, by the Winter Battle in Masuren, and by the battles near Lodz, you laid the foundations for all further successes and made it possible by means of the break-through of Gorlice and Tarnow, to force the Russian army to retreat and victoriously to hold our ground

against all further assaults of the enemy army masses. And now the costly prize of victory and the long struggle is in our hands. Our Baltic brethren and countrymen are liberated from the Russian yoke, and many again feel themselves Germans [About 6 per cent—Author]. God has been with us and will continue His aid."

On the same day the Kaiser telegraphed to the King of Saxony:

"You have much gratified me by your congratulatory telegram. Like you, I feel the deepest satisfaction and gratitude towards *God and the Army which has extorted this peace*. The Eastern front now being free, we have made an enormous step forward. *Firmly trusting in the sword*, I face the future, which will, and must, alter all our heavy sacrifices, bring us victory, and a strong peace."

Although the Reichstag Majority had bound itself on "Spoof Day" not to interfere with the conduct of the war, which includes the making of peace, it was fitting that they should explain their dereliction from their pledges of no annexations and no indemnities of the 19th of July. They did this cheerfully through thinly-veiled contentions of "liberating" Russian provinces.

In addition to these apparent excuses, however, they contended that conditions had changed since the 19th of July, and that a refusal by Germany's Western enemies to make "no annexation and no indemnity pledges," rendered the German pledges null and void and gave her a free hand in Russia.

Finally the Reichstag Majority and the Socialist

98 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Majority sought to cover their abandonment of their alleged principles, by introducing wordy resolutions in favour "of self-determination" in the territories annexed by Russia.

Herr Haase, leader of the 18 Independent U-Socialists, threw interesting light upon the crookedness of his confrères when he said in the Reichstag that these resolutions were merely a new attempt to confuse public opinion in clouds of smoke. He added that the Reichstag Peace Resolution of July 19th was itself nothing but a smoke-cloud intended to stir the masses. Continuing, he said:

"Our feelings are only feelings of shame. Herr Scheidemann, Herr Ebert, and Herr David (the Socialist Majority leaders) still go on planting hope on a grave. Never has the antagonism to Germany flourished as it flourishes now. The Reichstag Resolution does not contain the smallest grain of democracy. Even to Turkey we are surrendering large territories without consulting the population, and the cries of the Armenians for help die away unregarded in Berlin. The peace treaty with Finland is a mere sham. The actual Government there is in the hands of the Bolsheviks, but we interfere in the internal affairs of the country—against the Bolsheviks. In Finland, as elsewhere, we are provoking a lasting hatred among the great mass of the population. The German Government is sowing the wind and will reap the storm."

It might be cited by those among us who believe that the Social Democrats in themselves may some day effect peace, that although the Social Democratic Majority, unlike the Minority, did not vote *against* the Peace treaties formulated by the Military with Rus-

sia and Roumania, nevertheless did not vote *for* them. This is perfectly true, but it makes the case against them all the worse. They are either invertebrates or they are deceitfully playing the military game; or, as is most probable, they combine the two. In any event, they continue to serve the purpose of gulling many among us.

The Socialist member of the Reichstag, Wolfgang-Heine, had the courage to protest against his party's spineless connivance with Pan-German policy when he said: "Full account must some day be taken of those who pursue a policy which led to this frightful war. The blame lies not alone with the Junkers and those like-minded with them, but with the whole German people. The Socialists are particularly responsible; for they always follow a policy of protest and then abstain from opposing with their votes that against which they protest."

From the revolutionary point of view, the Germans might be divided into three classes. To the first belong the leaders, the half-deified army officers and professors, and the great men of business. The second class contains the bulk of the people. Class three contains the eighteen less revolutionary extremists in the Reichstag, a small minority of the population, certainly not more than one-fifth.

This last class has already endeavoured to make its protests heard and felt, but a police system armed with revolver, sword, and machine gun, with espionage and "preventive arrest," has rendered all such attempts futile. It is obvious that there can be no hope of a revolution until the third class wins the support of the second; but the latter despises the former and

100 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

seeks to curry favour with the first class, from which it derives its ready-made ideas.

In comparing the Russian and the German peoples in respect of revolution, certain differences should be kept in mind. The Russian people were kept loyal through fear; the German people through fear plus education, and of these education is by far the more potent. In Germany, we find the phenomenon of the lowest percentage of illiteracy and the highest percentage of delusion of any advanced nation.

Remember that for three generations the German's belief in this institution has been bred in his very marrow. He is grafted to the tree of State at the age of five and rarely does he fail to grow more firmly into the fibre of the wood with each succeeding year.

The Germans love their country and are ardent students of its history as revealed to them by their professors—men who always write with the hope of official approval. That is why their glorious history, as they see it, is the history of the house of Hohenzollern—the axis of the German world, the only world worth while. Democratic ideas filter but slowly through iron frontiers, and while most Germans whine at the Allies' blockade of the German stomach, they delight in their own government's blockade of the German mind.

If a neutral arrives in England from Germany, he is asked by every one he meets:

"How are things really over there?"

Reverse the situation, and the average German would not think of seeking information from the traveller, but would explain the whole situation to him.

SMOKE-CLOUDS OF DEMOCRACY 101

People will fight equally hard for their beliefs whether those beliefs are right or wrong. So long as the Germans' creed centres upon their faith in the emperor and the imperial system, the combination of blindly obedient human ants, putting all their trust in a set of unscrupulously ambitious leaders, will continue to be a danger to the society of nations. And their faith will not be shaken until the failure of the militaristic autocrat is demonstrated by the defeat of his armies.

There can be no hope of genuine political reform in Germany until the German people realise and admit the absurdity of their present belief that their country, after exhausting every possible means of keeping the peace, was forced to defend herself against a ring of jealous enemies. That delusion is the foundation-stone upon which the government has reared its whole gigantic structure of falsehood.

One might reasonably suppose that Prince Lichnowsky, German Ambassador to London up to the outbreak of war, would have shattered this foundation-stone, when he furnished definite proof that Germany, not Great Britain, deliberately willed war. One might suppose, indeed, that the German people would be impressed by such points in the revelations as:

1. "Of course it would only have needed a hint to make Count Berchtold (the Austrian Foreign Minister) satisfy himself with a diplomatic success and put up with the Serbian reply. But this hint was not given. On the contrary, we pressed for war. After our refusal Sir Edward Grey asked us to come forward with a proposal of our own, *but we insisted upon war.*

2. The urgent appeals and definite declarations of

102 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Monsieur Sazonoff (Russian Foreign Minister), later on the positively humble telegrams of the Czar, the repeated proposals of Sir Edward Grey, the warnings of the Italian foreign minister and Bollati (Italian Ambassador in Berlin), my urgent advice—all were of no use; for Berlin went on insisting that Serbia must be massacred.

3. Count Mensdorff (Austrian Ambassador) accompanied us to the train with his staff. He was cheerful, and gave me to understand that perhaps he would remain in London. *To the English, however, he said that it was not Austria, but we, who had wanted the war.*

The special train took us from London to Paris, where a guard of honour was drawn up for me. I was treated like a departing sovereign. Thus ended my London mission. *It was wrecked not by the perfidy of the British, but by the perfidy of our policy.*

4. When now, after two years in Germany, I realise everything in retrospect, I say to myself that I realised too late that there was no place for me in a system which for years has lived only on tradition and on routine, which tolerates representatives who report only what one wants to read.

Absence of prejudice and independent judgment are combatted. Want of ability and of character are extolled and esteemed.

I had to support in London a policy which I knew to be fallacious. I was paid out for it, for it was a sin against the Holy Ghost.

5. *Our own White Book, owing to its poverty and gaps, constitutes a grave self-accusation:*

6. In the days between July 23 and July 30, 1914, when M. Sazonoff emphatically declared that Russia could not tolerate an attack upon Serbia, we rejected the British proposals of mediation, although Serbia, un-

der Russian and British pressure, had accepted almost the whole ultimatum, and although an agreement about the two points in question could easily have been reached, and Count Berchtold was even ready to satisfy himself with the Serbian reply.

On July 30, when Count Berchtold wanted to give way, we, without Austria having been attacked, replied to Russia's mobilisation by sending an ultimatum to Petersburg, and on July 31 we declared war on the Russians, although the Czar had pledged his word that as long as negotiations continued not a man should march—so that *we deliberately destroyed the possibility of a peaceful settlement.*

In view of these indisputable facts, it is not surprising that the whole civilised world outside Germany attributes to us the sole guilt for the world-war.

7. Is it not intelligible that our enemies declare that they will not rest until a system is destroyed which constitutes a permanent threatening of our neighbours? Must they not otherwise fear that in a few years they will again see their provinces overrun and their towns and villages destroyed? Were those people not right who declared that it was the spirit of Treitschke and Bernhardi which dominated the German people—the spirit which glorifies war as an aim in itself and does not abhor it as an evil? Were those people not right who said that among us it is still the feudal knights and Junkers and the caste of warriors who rule and who fix our ideals and our values—not the civilian gentlemen? Were they not right who said that the love of duelling, which inspires our youth at the universities, lives on in those who guide the fortunes of the people? Had not the events at Zabern and the Parliamentary debates on that case shown foreign countries how civil rights and freedoms are valued among us, when questions of military power are on the other side?

104 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Militarism, really a school for the nation and an instrument of policy, makes policy into the instrument of military power, if the patriarchal absolutism of a soldier-kingdom renders possible an attitude which would not be permitted by a democracy which had disengaged itself from military Junker influences.

That is what our enemies think, and that is what they are bound to think, when they see that, in spite of capitalistic industrialisation, and in spite of Socialistic organisation, the living, as Friedrich Nietzsche says, are still governed by the dead. The principal war aim of our enemies, the democratisation of Germany, will be achieved."

If it is true, as many say, that the German people would oppose their government, its deceits and ideas of conquests, once the scales dropped from their eyes, and overthrow their rulers, why have they not done so in the light of the Lichnowsky revelations? They have not for two reasons:

In the first place, their "hate" obsession is so great that the Government can circulate with considerable success stories in the Press tending to show that Prince Lichnowsky is afflicted with anglomania and other mental trouble, just as they dispose of Doctor Mühlön (a former director at Krupp's and later in the employ of the German foreign office, whose conscience caused him to go to Switzerland, where, in security, he tells the truth of German plans for war) by declaring that he is suffering from neurasthenia. Denunciation is a favourite weapon with the German Government; indeed, the writer has had it directed against him both in England and in the United States. The Government has been successful to the amazing extent that the Lich-

nowsky revelations have been set aside by *all* Germans political parties except the Socialist Minority of 18.

The second and more important reason, however, is that education has made the Germans a thoughtfully-economic and practical people. Among all European belligerents, thoughts of accumulated war-debt and taxation growing out of it are appalling. In no country, however, to such an extent as in Germany, have I heard boastful expressions of hope of indemnities which would make tax paying even a lighter burden than before the war; or a corresponding depression and whining when, in the lights and shades of the struggle, it has sometimes seemed that these indemnities might not be forthcoming.

When the chances of loot looked especially bright, Doctor Helfferich, then Secretary of the Imperial Treasury, assured the plunder-loving populace by proclaiming, "We do not desire to increase by taxation the heavy burden which war throws upon our people. *Germany's enemies deserve to drag the leaden weight through the centuries to come.*"

I have talked earnestly with many Social Democratic members of the Reichstag, and almost without exception I have found them intensely practical men, combining business ability with a deep knowledge of economics.

Although keeping an eye on electoral reform, members of the Social Democratic Majority are solidly behind the war-machine. In fact, were I not aware of their party affiliations, I should have mistaken some of them for dyed-in-the-wool Conservatives. In Great Britain and America most of them would be Liberals; but in Germany, with its social caste of parties, they

106 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

are forced to become Social Democrats in order to gratify their political ambitions. Almost invariably, they display the customary weakness of the subjects of the Empire of prostrating themselves at the feet of the men higher up if these but show them a little personal consideration.

Take Herr Scheidemann, the Social Democratic leader, for example. When he returned from Stockholm in the summer of 1917, he expressed as his unshakable conviction the principle that there would be no peace until Germany became thoroughly democratised. Yet he says—after his hopes had again been brightened by successes in the East:

“We must protect ourselves against Russia so long as she remains our enemy, but we do not wish the work of the revolution to fall to the ground. The disorderly retreat condemns the masses of Russian soldiers to frightful sufferings, and the Socialist Government of Russia lays the blame for this tremendous misfortune upon another Socialist body, the Maximalists. Think if such a misfortune were to befall the German Army and the Government were able to blame for it the Socialist Party in Germany! Here you have the key to the understanding of our attitude. If anything similar were to happen with us, it would mean the downfall of Germany, and at the same time the downfall of the German democracy.

“Our Russian comrades will now perhaps understand why we did not follow their advice and copy their revolution. They will now perhaps realise that we did not wish to prepare for the German people the fate which the Russian people now have to endure. We must reach democracy by other paths, and we are

already upon them. I do not doubt for a moment that we shall have equal suffrage in Prussia and the Parliamentary system after the war."

Note, *after the war*.

The Social Democrats are practical men who encourage the Russians to talk platitudes and dream while they look realities in the face. I have heard some of them talk of the Russian as a good-natured, simple fellow who would benefit by the German development of his land.

They would oppose paying indemnities as vigorously as the rest of the Germans. Even such an extreme member of the Minority as the hater of militarism who suggested that I should go to Potsdam to see the return from the Somme of the battered Prussian Guard, gave me the following views:

"We wish to be just to our enemies, and we do not wish any of their territory. But we must safeguard the future of Germany. *In all wars throughout history the winner has recouped financially either through direct indemnity or through commercial expansion as a result of the war.* I believe that neither side should pay the other in this war, with the single exception that we should recompense Belgium.

"A drawn war, so far as the west is concerned, means a great burden on all the belligerents for many years. The country whose people will make the greatest sacrifices to throw off this burden as soon as possible will be triumphant in the peaceful conquests of the markets of the world. Our people are more loyal to the idea of the State and will bear more patiently such sacrifices than the individualistic Eng-

108 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

lish, to whom a drawn war will mean a long and disastrous period of unrest.

"We are certain of the industrial control of the Near East. We should not interfere with the political independence of the Near Eastern countries, but we recognise that it is to their advantage as well as our own that they be directed by a strong policy which will enable German science to develop this region so richly endowed by nature."

In short, though some Social Democrats have expressed to me deep regret that their Government has got Germany into such a mess—or could not keep Germany out of such a mess, as they prefer to put it—they are not going to make matters worse by forcing internal dissensions to a point which would jeopardise their own and their country's prosperity. In other words, though they want democracy, they do not want it at the expense of their financial welfare.

CHAPTER V

THE WILSON WEDGE

AND now," I asked at length, "why, in your honest opinion, did America come into the war?"

I put this question to a group of Hungarian prisoners in early January, 1918, who formed part of the fourteen hundred taken by the French on Monte Tomba a few days before. We were in a great square courtyard in the old Italian city of Castlefranco. From the grey and white mountain mass to the north came the rolling of the guns, while just outside squads of Italian soldiers were taking bodies from a mass of wreckage that had been a hospital full of wounded the night before, but was now a blood-soaked shambles of the dead.

The raiders who flew down from the North had done their work.

I determined, however, to show no rancour while among the prisoners. I was making definite investigations with the consent of the French Commandant. This is a war of opinions, and it will never really end until our enemies change some of theirs. That is why, after I had broken the ice with a chat about my visits to their country, I asked the all-important question. They hung back, however, and avoided a direct reply, presumably either because they wished to avoid hurting my feelings or arousing resentment in me.

110 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

At length, after reassuring them by promising that if they would give me their frank opinion I should with equal frankness give our side of the story if they wished, I again asked—"Why did America declare war?"

"For financial reasons, if I may say so," the most audacious replied, hesitatingly and with extreme politeness.

I took this pleasantly, and encouraged them to continue.

"The financial alliance with England caused America's entrance," a second elaborated to the approving nods of the rest.

"But have you not read President Wilson's speeches?" I asked.

Evidently they had not, to judge by their puzzled expressions.

After considerable questioning, I found that some of them had read extracts with which, however, they were not greatly impressed; though it is important to note that their own Press comments on our President and his utterances, had become clearly engraved on their minds.

"But President Wilson sought to make it clear when we entered the war that we did so for no material gain, I exclaimed. "He said: 'We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind.'"

I found my listeners looking at one another, knowingly. When I sought an explanation, however,

they again became reticent. To get them to talk freely about President Wilson was most difficult of all, due no doubt to an analogy in their minds of the case reversed with the sacrilege of an American prisoner expressing a not flattering opinion about the Hapsburg ruler. I reminded them that the President of the United States was elected by the people because they considered him the best man to be their leader for four years, and that there was not the least likelihood of him casting into prison a fellow citizen who listened dispassionately to an honest expression of opinion of the enemy.

Whereupon they delicately assured me that statements such as those just quoted by me were pure hypocrisy. I was not surprised, inasmuch as I had long since discovered that this idea was the officially-bottled milk upon which the political children of the Central Empires have been nourished.

They then agreed in amplifying this charge by saying that the President is a politician under the influence of the plutocrats who are the real rulers of America, these in turn being influenced in international matters by the moneyed classes of England.

This, then, is the extent to which our talk of making the world safe for democracy had permeated the minds of these Hungarians. I found the same stock idea on why we are in the war among German prisoners in 1918, and without variation I found it dominating the minds of the extremists among the Sinn Feiners when I tramped through the mountain villages of Kerry, or up the Shannon bank to Claire. Across the Atlantic, I find it among men of ambiguous citizenship in our own United States. Like a spider's web

112 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

this idea runs over the world from the Wilhelmstrasse to bind the faithful and the dupes.

Once we became a belligerent, the German Government, ever alert to the prime importance of maintaining unity, recognised fully the danger of the wedge which the American President was seeking to drive between the German Government and the German people. The authorities, in consequence, took prompt measures to blunt this wedge through the proper "education" of the people.

When the Wilhelmstrasse received President Wilson's entry into war speech of April 2, 1917, it promptly mobilised the Press for the great campaign of enlightenment. Only about two-thirds of the speech was considered safe for the German people, and much of this was carefully packed so that it would not go off when handled. The declarations that we are not making war on the German people, that Germany's war is autocracy-made, and that it has become a war on civilisation, humanity and all nations, were reproduced with fair accuracy.

On the other hand, the charges that the Imperial Government filled American communities and government offices with spies, even before the war began, has set "criminal intrigues everywhere afoot against our national unity of counsel, our peace within and without, our industries and our commerce," and that these "intrigues have been carried on at the instigation, with the support, and even under the personal directions of official agents of the Imperial Government accredited to the Government of the United States"—all these were suppressed. This particular suppression was necessary in order that the German leaders

might consistently represent to their people that their efforts were always peaceful, that they had sought to avoid war, and that it is their enemies, not they, who insist that it shall be uselessly prolonged.

The German version eliminates also the President's assertion that, "We are now about to accept gauge of battle with this natural foe to liberty."

In the same papers with the government-edited account of the speech, the government-inspired campaign of hate against the President and his countrymen was formally launched. This was not a new campaign by any means; it was merely a redoubled one.

The *Lokal-Anzeiger* struck the keynote by denouncing President Wilson as an "Anglo-Saxon fanatic," "a deliberate liar," and a "sanctimonious hypocrite." The gentle reader was then reminded of some of the names the American editors and clergymen have called the Germans during the war—"mad dogs," "barbarians," "scientifically-trained wild beasts," "a horde of murderers," "Huns," "pirates"—and says that "the unmeasured hostility that such expressions denote was systematically propagated and inflamed by President Wilson, who does not hate the German Government but the German race."

The article, of course, concluded with a threat. Not to have done so would have involved a serious Prussian omission. "Let America know that Wilson's assurance that this war is not against the German people, but against the German Government, cannot lessen the fury which his conduct throughout the world-war has stirred up, and which his last message has fanned into flaming fire. For his assurance is untrue and dishonourable, just as his whole message is from first to last.

Mr. Wilson knows perfectly well that there has never been a war in history which has been so little a dynastic war or so much the war of a whole nation battling for its existence as the war into which hate and envy forced Germany to defend herself against a league which now embraces both hemispheres." (Note the thread-worn phonograph record in the last sentence.)

Month after month the German Press played in this key, it being required every day to denounce President Wilson's "interference" with Germany. Even the *Frankfort Gazette*, Germany's leading financial organ and a journal so moderate that it is usually in hot water with the military, declared in September, 1917:

"The German people will make its State institutions in accordance with the high level of its political, moral, and intellectual strength, and according to its needs—not as seems good to the patronising narrowness of Herr Wilson and Herr Lansing. *These changes in our constitutional life cannot have anything whatever to do with the peace.* (Observe that even the *Frankfort Gazette* fails to grasp what we are fighting for.) Peace will come when our enemies have accustomed themselves to the thought that no conditions can be dictated to us, but that they must come to an agreement with us about the conditions of the common life of the peoples. After all that has happened in the past three years in West and East and at sea, it is a disastrous mistake to go on talking to us as if we were compelled to accept peace as a gift."

The *Cologne-Gazette*, always rabidly anti-American as well as anti-British, has made an interesting collection of the denunciations of Mr. Wilson's note, which have appeared in the newspapers of the German So-

cialist Majority. These are correctly described as "vigorous." Indeed, the Socialist *Hamburg Echo* says: "The German people do not care a damn for Wilson."

The reader should never underestimate the importance of the newspaper as a moulder of public opinion in Germany. Since the majority of the people have embraced State-worship as their politico-religious creed, the officially-inspired newspaper has a place in the modern German home akin to that formerly held by the Bible. The German Government, however, does not stop with the newspaper, but has mobilised the professors, pastors, and actors against the Wilson wedge.* In its battle against Wilsonian utterances, it even went to the extent, after the reply to the Pope's Peace note in September, 1917, of mobilising the mayors and Town Councils throughout Germany to pass resolutions against Mr. Wilson. These were placarded upon the official bulletin-boards which form parts of the regulation scenic requirements of every German town. The one posted in Potsdam will give an idea of the soothing diction which can be inspired from above:

"Filled with contempt, our citizens turn aside from the shameless hypocrite who seeks to hide behind high-toned idealism his anxiety about the blood-money which he has advanced to his English colleague in ideas and in business, and who in his blindness dares to suggest to the German people that it should come to the help of its impotent enemies by cutting itself to pieces.

"The crafty hypocrite Wilson, who, with the simple impudence of an uneducated parvenu, has the insolence to interfere in our domestic affairs, may be assured that

* For position of these in the system, see "The Land of Deepening Shadow"—Chapters III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, and XI.

116 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

none but fools will believe that our pitiless enemies are giving us good advice when they try to embitter our domestic unity. The more they abuse our Kaiser and our Government, the more highly will our people appreciate the full value of Kaiser and Government, which nothing could replace. Standing firmly and loyally together, Kaiser and people will force the peace which we need. The German people, whose deep-based education in all spheres has led the van of human civilisation for centuries—long before the United States of North America existed—and whose moral strength and technical ability are surpassed by no other people, can, if it were really necessary, starve and die, but can never bow the neck before a victorious enemy. Let Herr Wilson take note of that!"

Apparently the German Government believed that it had satisfactorily deflected the Wilson wedge which it referred to as a "maliciously and hopelessly ignorant attempt to separate the people from their beloved rulers." For it actually seized upon the President's differentiation as its star war loan advertisement.

The following is a translation of this advertisement:

THE ANSWER TO WILSON

At last the United States has openly stepped to the side of England, whose cause it has secretly supported since the beginning of the war. Unrestricted U-boat war is taken as a pretext. In the course of his plans, Wilson even employs the oft-tried but unsuccessful attempt to erect a barrier between the German people and the German Government. How little does Wilson know the German people and German nature!

Never in the history of the German Empire has a decision of the government been so unanimously longed

for and acclaimed by the whole people as the freeing of our U-boats from every fetter in the war against England—the accursed instigator and criminal prolonger of this terrible war.

The war loan offers the opportunity to show Wilson what the German people really think of the U-boat question. No one is entitled to stand aloof from this duty of honour. There is still time. Subscribe as much as you can, and if you have already subscribed, raise your subscription as much as your means will permit! That is

THE TRUE ANSWER TO WILSON

Although the German Government has from the first made no pretence of hushing up the President's differentiation between it and the people, it has grown increasingly strict in keeping from its subjects President Wilson's definite statements concerning our war aims and determination. This strictness is indeed applied to all Allied utterances at present. The method is simple and consists of two parts:

First. Only a summary of the speech, not its actual wording, is allowed in the newspapers. In this way, statements showing Allied right, Pan-German lust of conquest and the like, can be obscured.

Second. With the summary, every German newspaper is required to publish an appended note of explanation. This note completes the distortion of the issues.

An example of this effective method is the German Government's handling of the President's first war-anniversary speech at Baltimore April 6, 1918—the speech in which he drew a lesson for the whole world from German duplicity in dealing with Russia and an-

118 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

nounced that we should use "force, force to the utmost, force without stint or limit." After failing to learn in the safe-to-read summary the specific charges against the Imperial Government, the German reader is enabled to acquire a fresh flush of hate in the perusal of the appended note in his newspaper-bible:

"This speech turns history upside down. The whole world knows that the tremendous battle which is now being fought out in the West is the consequence of the war will of the Entente. Germany had given an unmis-takable declaration of her readiness to enter into nego-tiations. The Entente willed otherwise. If Wilson had been honestly concerned about peace and the avoidance of further bloodshed, he ought to have used his influence accordingly with his allies. Instead of that he did nothing to prevent the Versailles resolutions. His old tirades about right and justice have been contradicted afresh by the proceedings against Holland. There is still a yawning gulf between his words and his deeds. Now he appeals openly to the utmost force. Thus he at last declares clearly what the policy of America and her allies means—force against everything which is in their way in the world. Germany will not submit to the yoke of force. That is why she is fighting her heroic war. Wilson's speech is the best propaganda for our war loan, for it shows what a lost war would mean to Germany."

A few weeks before the extremely important Balti-more speech, I grew greatly interested one evening in Paris, in the discussion for and against the President's policy of insisting upon a distinction between the Ger-man people and their Government in this war. On this particular evening, there was no dispute as to the

guilt or innocence of the German people. Every one was quite in agreement with the Socialistic member of the Reichstag, Wolfgang Heine, who said:

"The blame lies not alone with the Junkers and those like-minded with them, but with the whole German people."

The whole question concerned the amount of success that the Wilson wedge had thus far achieved in Germany. Among those present was an American who had come out of Germany into Switzerland a short time before and was now on his way home after the very difficult transit permission from the French had been obtained. His general outlook was similar to that of some of the other Americans who "stayed over" in Germany because they had so endeared themselves to the Wilhelmstrasse that they were at a loss to understand why such a trifle as a war between the United States and Germany should interrupt the pleasant, personally-conducted pursuit of their profession.

"President Wilson's distinction between the people in Germany and their Government, is a mistaken policy," said the man out of Germany. "I have seen it first-hand make the people more loyal to their rulers."

Before explaining why in the long run I take the opposite view, let us turn for a moment to the curious explanation of this policy offered by the one daily paper of the German Empire which has consistently fought for such alterations in the German constitution as would eliminate secret diplomacy and make Germany a civil, and not a military, state. This paper is the *Berliner Tageblatt*! At the conclusion of its

120 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

hard-fought campaign, through the summer of 1917, and into early 1918 for democratic reform it said:

"The people of all countries resent foreign interference with their domestic affairs. President Wilson understands this, and he knew perfectly well what he was doing when he demanded parliamentary government of Germany. He knew that the majority of Germans in favour of reform would be so resentful that they would prefer to stand by the reactionary Junker-annexationists than make a common cause with an outsider. That was exactly what he wished to do inasmuch as the admittance in Germany of the whole people into the management of their foreign affairs, would be a fatal blow to him and the other leaders of the Allies; for it would wrench the weapons of agitation from their hands—their phrase-weapons—that this is a struggle against militarism, a conflict with absolutism."

In its zeal for constitutional reform (which, always remember, is distinct from a desire for peace that would be acceptable to the Allies) the *Tageblatt*, probably unintentionally, draws a wrong deduction from President Wilson's policy, as we understand it,—a deduction, however, which corroborates the evidence that the German Government, through its continuing ability to pervert the minds of its subjects, has turned into cement that which was intended as a wedge. That is, it has succeeded in doing it for something more than the first year of the war with the United States.

The comforting fact is, however, that Germany has been seething internally like a volcano since early in 1916, and is going to seethe until the fires of the Allies

cause her to erupt some day—or she puts those fires out.

The democratic tendencies, boiling up from time to time, have filled the disciples of Pan-Germanism, Kaiserism, and the kindred evils, that we are fighting with so much alarm that they are banding themselves together to nip German Democracy in the bud. For, *if the leaders see no likelihood of a popular upheaval why did they insist at Brest-Litovsk that the Russians must conduct no propaganda in the occupied provinces? And why do they go to such extremes in the way of reprisals as to compel the British to discontinue the practice of dropping propaganda from air-planes?*

The Kaiser's temporising talk always causes apprehension in the Junkers, who believe in the delightfully simple policy of never yielding an inch at home or abroad. That is why the Crown Prince is more popular with them than is his father. They are the real rulers of Prussia, and their motto is still:

“Unser Koenig absolut
Wenn er unsern Willen tut.”

(Our King is absolute if he does our will.)

Personally, I do not believe that the Kaiser intends to give any real, lasting power of self-government to his subjects. Although he ejected Bismarck he has not ejected his method of promise and withdrawal. In defending his acceptance of German universal suffrage in 1866 for the North German Bund Bismarck explained the whole process of making sham domestic concessions in time of war, and paying temporary “blackmail” to the “liberty-mongers” in the confident belief that after the immediate object—victory—had

122 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

been gained the "damage" done by the concessions can be repaired.

I present Bismarck's own words, which I quote below as further evidence of my contention in Chapter II that—"Prussia does not yield, she only seems to yield." We should keep these reminiscences of Bismarck's in mind until we are done with Prussianism, that we may not be further duped.

"I determined to regulate the movements of our home policy in accordance with the question whether it would support or injure the impression abroad of our power and coherence.

"I argued to myself that our first great aim must be independence and security in our foreign relations; that to this end not only was actual removal of internal dissensions requisite, but also any appearance of such a thing must be avoided in the sight of the foreign Powers and of Germany. If we first gained independence of foreign influence, we should then be able to move freely in our internal development, and to organise our institutions in as liberal or reactionary a manner as should seem right and fitting. If possible I felt that we should adjourn all domestic questions until we had secured our national aims abroad.

"Until that should be accomplished I was ready, if necessary, to pay blackmail to the Opposition, in order to be in a position in the first place to throw into the scale our full power, and diplomatically to use the appearance of this united power and, in case of need, even to have the possibility of letting loose national revolutionary movements against our enemies.

"Looking to the necessity, in a fight against an overwhelming foreign Power, of being able, in extreme need, to use even revolutionary means, I had had no hesitation whatever in throwing into the frying-pan the most

powerful ingredient known at that time to liberty-mongers, namely, universal suffrage, so as to frighten off foreign monarchies from trying to stick a finger into our national omelette. I never doubted that the German people would be strong and clever enough to free themselves from the suffrage as soon as they realised that it was a harmful institution.

"The acceptance of universal suffrage was a weapon in the war against Austria and other foreign countries, in the war for German unity, as well as a threat to use the last weapon in a struggle against coalitions. In a war of this sort, when it becomes a matter of life and death, one does not look at the weapons that one seizes nor the value of what one destroys in using them; one is guided at the moment by no other thought than the issue of the war, and the preservation of one's external independence. The settling of affairs and reparation of the damage have to take place after the peace."

But the stubborn Junker is opposed to every vestige of even apparent or temporary yielding to democracy, consequently a group of the most powerful have formed a clique which they call the "League of the Emperor's Faithful." This is an organisation formed to supplement the Tirpitz Fatherland party and support its agitation for the suppression of sentiment in favour of Parliamentary government. One of the "Faithful" is a former Junker member of the Reichstag, Herr von Oldenburg-Januschau, who immortalised himself a few years before the war by declaring that the Kaiser should always be in a position "to send a lieutenant and ten men to close up the damned Reichstag."

124 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

In a remarkable petition to William II the League concludes with vigour:

"Parliamentary government? Bah! The old Frederick, called the Great even by his enemies, would turn in his grave if he knew of the shame we are now going through. Why is the Crown looking on in silence? Why does it tolerate these things? Why does it promote them? There is but one explanation. It must be feared that the throne is tottering. It can only be the half-admitted, half-concealed threats of the Socialist leaders to start a revolution that have induced the man who was once the most convinced advocate of the Divine Right of Kings to lend a helping hand to the democratisation of his Empire. May God give him, who is endowed so richly with talent in other directions, the indestructible calm and firmness of a William I.

"An Emperor William II, who in a spirit of weak submission continues to promote the democratisation of Germany would be an unintelligible stranger to us. To an Emperor William II who with firm hand tears into shreds the artificially woven veil of democratic fog; who sends to the devil all those who would blackmail the throne out of its rights; who scatters to the four winds all those who seek to obstruct the destined development of Prussia and Germany—to such a Kaiser the German nation, barring a few unpatriotic rowdies and their heedless followers, would look up joyfully, accord him their love, honour, and affection, and breathe freely again in the consciousness that all is well with our glorious Fatherland. German Kaiser, you have the choice!"

To help along the campaign, the *Kreutz Zeitung* (Gazette of the Cross), the chief organ of the Military in Prussia, quickly collected by subscription a millior

dollars to be used immediately in the fight against democratic tendencies in Germany.

Most important of all, however, is the campaign of the Krupp Press. Not only will the Great Industrialists of Rhineland cast guns to blast those who oppose their will, but they will forge printed words into the even more deadly weapons of manacles of the mind.

The Krupp methods fall into three groups:

1. To own newspapers directly.
2. To control great numbers of newspapers and magazines through heavy advertising subsidies.
3. To stamp out newspapers which advocate democracy, and a peace with no annexations in the West.

I would remind the reader that the Krupps and other great manufacturers of war material have piled up enormous fortunes during the war. For a long time they successfully fought the imposition of an excess war-profits tax. In February, 1918, I learned through exceedingly reliable Swedish sources that the Krupps were launching one of the most ambitious schemes of unsavoury big business methods in the history of the extermination of competition.

Newspapers, as everybody knows, are made from wood-pulp. Therefore, what could be simpler than planning to control the wood-pulp supply of Europe in order to force such radicals as the *Berliner Tageblatt* to the wall? They couldn't get it from the United States and Canada during the war, and the tariff barrier could keep it out after the war. Hence the activity of Krupp agents in Germany, Austria-Hungary, Scandinavia and Russia to buy up the wood-pulp manufacture. In this, to be sure, they are killing

two birds with one stone, since this commodity has supplanted cotton in their manufacture of propulsive ammunition.

It strikes me as a significant coincidence that within a month after my discovery of the octopus wood-pulp project Theodor Wolff, the editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, attacked the Krupp Press for its ambitious schemes for the annexation of the whole German Press—and consequently whole German public opinion.

Though Herr Wolff does not mention wood-pulp, he gives interesting details of the founding at Essen of an "advertisement company" which is known as the "Ala." This company, composed of a number of the most prominent German Industrialists, has now transferred its headquarters to Berlin, where it will be controlled by Herr Hugenberg, a prominent director of Krupp's. It is admitted that the business of the "Ala" is to supply advertisements to all sorts of newspapers and periodicals which undertake to promote the Pan-German policy. With it the Industrialists have founded what they call a "German Archive"—an institution which is to watch the German and foreign press, and to collect and arrange information about all newspapers for the guidance of the "Ala." This "Archive" is merely a drawing-room name for a detective agency, and the "Ala" itself is, as Herr Wolff says, "to all intents and purposes a corruption and bribery organisation."

Wolff shows that the same clique, with a lesser organisation, conducted the industrial-enlightenment campaign, which organised the political campaign about Morocco, the campaign that threatened to plunge Europe into war in 1911.

The Krupps and their colleagues are now seeking to fill every German with the spirit to hold out and bear any sacrifice in order to achieve the annexation which will give them commercial supremacy and lessen their taxes. They are organising careful press campaigns about every conceivable annexation of territory and assertion of German power. In addition to their rapidly increasing control of newspapers they are flooding the country with pamphlets and handbills, some of which are learned and scientific, while others, circulated "confidentially," contain all sorts of vague and unfounded statements devised to excite uninformed and "patriotic" opinion. These campaigns, needless to say, are conducted at utter variance with the policy which the Government professes in public lullaby-speeches.

Concurrently, the Krupps conduct a steady campaign against democracy. They know democracy would mean that they could exploit the toil of their workers to less degree. They know that democracy might demand eight-hour working-day as in America rather than the twelve and thirteen-hour working-day which, in part, has enabled them to "dump" their goods into other countries to force foreign competitors to the wall.

To be sure the German working-men are blessed with good sanitary conditions for the most part, but on the other hand, they know nothing of that surplus of energy which I find in American factories where men throw a ball around during lunch hour, or play games after the work of the day is done. The toiling German is more prone to take his recreation in a sitting posture in close proximity to a stein of beer. The Krupps

128 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

know too that democracy tends to eliminate secret plunder agreements between nations, tends toward peace rather than war. Under democracy they would lose control of the reins of power in Germany and the possibility of control of the reins of power of the greater part of the globe. So they will have none of democracy. It means their life. They will fight it to the death. Hence it is fitting that in their new and greatest campaign they start off with the following paragraph throughout their Press:

"The most dangerous enemy of the German people is Democracy. It is Democracy that we shall have to fight when our arms have long been at rest and the far-advanced frontiers of the new and greater Germany have been secured—in spite of July 19 and its Reichstag majority—in a German security-peace."

From which, one may gather, the German reader may joyfully infer that when Britain, France, Italy and America have been defeated, the war will begin again with cheers in the name of the German people against the German people themselves.

The "Anti-Democratic Catechism" circulated by the million among German and Austro-Hungarian troops is one of the Krupp pamphlets in the world's great ink-battle for the control—or in our case, the liberation—of the minds of the German people. A few extracts will show the calibre of Essen's mental-projectiles:

1. There is nothing more intolerable than Democracy.
2. In democratic countries money plays the chief rôle.
3. Some of our Socialists strive to enforce a peace of renunciation by provoking strikes and street demon-

strations. To-day any one who does not do his utmost to nip the democratic international movement in the bud, is working for the enemy. He is not working for true freedom and equality but for the interests of a gang of international rascals.

4. France's revolution formula—liberty, equality, fraternity—should read: insubordination, dishonour, hate.

5. America is the land of corruption and bribery—a thing wholly unknown among us Germans.

6. In the East wide areas now in our hands provide us with the necessary colonisation areas for German peasants. We must hold these, and in the West we must hold the important coal and iron regions which we occupy and which we gained with so much good German blood. Above all, we must hold the coast of Flanders."

Another leaflet, explaining German military successes in a light calculated to undermine faith in democracy in the minds of a militarily-nurtured populace, will enable the German soldier in his spare time in barracks, billets and trenches to understand the differences between Kaiser armies and Parliamentary armies. Indeed, the deductions drawn in this extraordinarily interesting circular should prove as interesting to us as to the Germans.

"1. One of the fundamental characteristics of the world-war is what is formulated as the opposition between Parliament Army and Kaiser Army. The German Empire and the Monarchies that are allied with it can to-day be confident that their Kaiser Armies will hold the field against the Parliament Armies of England, France, Italy and America.

130 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

"The antagonism between the military authority, which demands the domination that is absolutely necessary for the control of armies, and a Parliament which is jealous of its right of control threatens to interfere with and to weaken the unity of power and of leadership in war. On the other hand, such dangers are out of the question when the civil and military authority are absolutely united in the personality of a Monarch who is protected from Parliamentary interference by the autocracy which is guaranteed to him by the Constitution.

"We can only welcome the fact that now, immediately before the final decisions of the war, Russia is imperilled because the war-power, which hitherto was subject entirely to the absolute authority of the Czar, is put under the Duma and the Revolutionary parties. The necessary unity in the organism of the whole military forces is most securely guaranteed by the sovereign will of a Monarch—in Germany by an Emperor who is independent of the will of Parliament. Thirty years ago Bismarck powerfully resisted a Reichstag majority when it attempted, in Bismarck's words, 'to turn the Imperial Army into a Parliamentary Army.'

"It is to be hoped that Bismarck's successors will at all times see as effectively as he did to the defeat of all attempts by a Parliamentary democracy to diminish the perfect power of the Emperor and War Lord.

"2. Order and unity, guaranteed by a firmly anchored Monarchy, which has not yet been democratised, and which by strength of will masters all antagonisms, are two of the chief foundations and main sources of military and economic strength in war. That belligerent who has these two things always at his disposal retains a secure superiority over enemies among whom these things are threatened.

"In the midst of a war which has already lasted a long

time and presses hard upon the broad masses of the people—and especially when the war is reaching the final decisions—the lack of an indisputably secured Government must have a checking and paralysing effect upon the war-will in face of the dangers which threaten from starving and excited mobs. Warlike efficiency cannot be associated with lack of order and lack of unity. The revolutionary events in Russia give a picture of the lengths to which democratic tendencies can go—tendencies which, according to their admirers in Germany, must not be resisted by any firm dam. But waves can be broken—even democratic waves, irresistible though they pretend to be. Where the will is lacking for this, even the most powerful Monarchy must gradually be undermined. The safety of the German future will continue to depend not least upon such a Monarchy as the strong-willed centre of order and unity.”

This militaristic and anti-democratic flood of propaganda has the greatest effect among the German troops in that it is accompanied by supporting currents from some Social Democratic leaders who are happy to do the Government's bidding for the right to wear a bit of ribbon or the comfort of a Government job. The *Social Democratic Army Post*, for example, is a well-edited magazine published in Berlin, which circulates freely through the Kaiser's armies. It purports to be a purely Socialist organ, issued twice a month from the headquarters of the Socialist Majority.

The point is that it is promoted and subsidised by the German Foreign Office in a manner similar to the *Continental Times*, the organ which fooled so many gullible American visitors to the Fatherland.

The *Field Post* practices a studied moderation

132 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

which is very effective. Its leading themes are the German Government's deep love of peace (let the reader remember that this is a Socialistic organ for Socialistic readers at the close of the fourth year of the war), the patriotic sincerity of the Socialist Majority and the abomination of the Independent Socialists, the unreasonableness of the enemy and the steady progress of the "peace offensive"—i.e., the onward march of the Invisible Army.

How such work marches hand in hand with that of the Krupps and the Militarists in blocking the Wilson wedge, may be seen from a few typical quotations:

"1. The hope of a general peace is at present not very great. It looks as if the French and English absolutely desire a decision in the West with American help (written on the eve of the great German offensive, February, 1918). Unless these untaught people make an end of their present governments, they will hardly get peace.

"2. We Germans desire nothing more than we desire an early peace, but we decidedly refuse to submit to Wilson, to be starved by England, or to commit suicide on the advice of Russian revolutionists. Terrible though every hour is which separates us from peace, we must inform our enemies that, *although we Germans have always required a little domestic quarrelling, we still present an absolutely united front to the enemy without.*

"3. If we were in the first year of war, it might perhaps be said that Germany ought to set the good example, and that the others would follow. But who can still seriously believe that Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau would follow. Of course, if it must be, we shall negotiate even with these 'statesmen.' But let there be no deception about the fact that, as long as these politicians with their smashing schemes of con-

quest remain in power, it will hardly be possible to reach an agreement. Of course this is now a rosy prospect, but the German Socialists do not stimulate optimism either in peace or war."

And do all the Socialists swallow all this? They do not. My reliable advices from Germany leave me in no doubt that approximately the same proportion of "doubting Thomases" continues to exist as when I left there. To be sure, they do most of their doubting under the safety of silence.

A little anecdote may illustrate the state of mind of the non-swallowers.

One early autumn day, 1916, I was walking alone by the Elba River towards Königstein. I couldn't help feeling bright-spirited as I swung along with my eyes drinking in the lovely Saxon landscape to which nature has been so kind. Back in Hennersdorf, the little children, just released from school, were stripping the last blackberries from the bushes that bordered the highroad, while ahead the Königstein rose abruptly from the waters, with the sun burnishing the old fortress that crowned its summit, once a sentinel against Austria but now the prison of British officers.

In a beet field that bordered the road, a solitary man was working.

"Looks like a good crop," I greeted cheerily.

"Good enough, I suppose," he muttered without enthusiasm.

He frowned and seemed out of keeping with the peaceful sunlit country. He clearly had a grievance, which made him journalistically interesting. So I tarried.

My accent soon revealed in the patches of conversation which followed that I was not a countryman of his. When I told him that I was an American I respectfully paused to await the usual fusillade of abuse against our munition-making, one of the many little customs, too numerous to mention, which caused brainstorms amongst the Kaiser's subjects. I felt embarrassed when it did not come.

On the contrary, after some questioning on his part, he felt that he could safely ventilate his feelings to one who had escaped what to him was clearly the misfortune of having been born under the German flag. He blurted out: "I am a soldier."

"Why do you not wear your uniform?" I asked.

"I am home on leave for five weeks to work in the fields," he explained. "I hate the uniform. I'm glad to be out of it."

"Soldiering has its unpleasant occasions," I consoled.

"It is all unpleasant with me." He talked rapidly and with anger. "Did you see that big white building back across the river?—Well, that's a prison for criminals—for men that murder and rob. They are treated better than we who go out and fight for our country."

This is not the general sentiment in the German army, so I remonstrated with the man that perhaps he had been unfortunate in being under the jurisdiction of one of the more brutal of the under-officers.

"There are plenty who feel the same as I do," he argued. "We're tired of sacrificing ourselves to enrich landowners and industrialists. We are especially sick of the way our newspapers lie to us about the good-

ness of our government and our duty, always duty. I can not understand why you remain in Germany. I wanted to go to America before the war, but my wife was afraid of seasickness, so, like a fool, I stayed."

And the man actually sobbed at the recollection of the chance he had missed. "Can you leave Germany?" he asked.

That was the question that had been bothering me for months, but to him I merely said, "Of course!"

Then his passion burst all bounds.

"You are my friend," he said. "When you reach America, tell the people not to believe anything that comes from our Government. Tell them that the German newspapers lie. But do not wait until you reach home," he hurried on excitedly. "You are an American, not a German subject, and you can do things that we dare not do. Write to your newspapers at once that the German newspapers are full of lies."

I was about to explain that journalists had to submit all "copy" to the official censor, and that it was not his custom to pass just that kind of material. Besides there were considerations of one's health and all that sort of thing. Before I could reply, however, there was a clatter of hoofs where the road turned up from the river, and two cavalry officers galloped into view. A frightened look passed over the face of the man, whose tongue was silenced by the sight of authority. "You are my friend, remember," he said softly. "Just make believe you stopped because I asked you the time of day."

So I pulled out my watch and said "Half-past four," then passed on leaving one of the seventy millions to work in the beet-field while his thoughts turned bit-

136 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

terly to another land and the life that might have been.

An exception, you will say! That he was unusually vehement, I admit; yet I did meet others with like sentiments when German spirits sank to their lowest in late 1916.

I agreed, at that time, that the number of Germans who would welcome a revolution which would result in the overthrow of their present government was between fifteen and twenty per cent.

In the early summer of 1918 my informants in Germany assured me that the majority of the people, hopeful because of the peace with Russia and the victories in the West, again returned to the boastful tone of the first two years. Therefore, they said, the fifteen to twenty per cent. should be reduced by five, until the Allied offensive again swung back the scales in the late summer.

The extremists, let me again remind the reader, are not of the main body of Socialists, but make up the supporters of the eighteen Socialist Independents in the Reichstag. Needless to repeat they do not have a free hand, but are steadily fought by Junkers and Majority Socialists alike. The official summary of the sentences passed in May by the Supreme Court of the German Empire at Leipzig on twelve persons charged with treason and other offences makes an interesting revelation of the thoroughness of the German system of suppression. The prisoners, who received sentences of from two and one-half to eight years' penal servitude, were all described in court as adherents of the Independent Socialists and all the offences were concerned

with the unlawful circulation of leaflets. The convicts are described as follows:

"(1) A shop girl, aged 23 (two and a half years' penal servitude); (2) a factory girl, aged 19; (3) a factory girl, aged 20; (4) a working woman, aged 21 (four years' penal servitude); (5) a woman librarian, aged 27; (6) a mason's apprentice, aged 17; (7) a bookkeeper, aged 23; (8) a draughtsman's apprentice, aged 17; (9) a printer, aged 66 (four years' penal servitude); (10) a mason's wife, aged 36 (18 months' penal servitude); (11) a shopkeeper, aged 26 (eight years' penal servitude); and (12) a piano-maker's apprentice, aged 16 (two and a half years' imprisonment).

In no country in the world have I seen so many placards offering a reward for the detection of crime as in Germany. The highly-developed national characteristic of spying upon one another and cackling to officialdom after the manner of the "good boy" in school is proving of great value to the police in the suppression of anything tending to undermine the unity of will to win.

The following notice was tacked up all over Berlin in the spring of 1917:

**THE COMMANDANT IN THE MARK OF
BRANDENBURG ANNOUNCES**

the reward of 3,000 marks for information leading to the arrest of the writer of the pamphlet: "The Lessons of The Great Strike of The People."

Though the chief of the military police, a notoriously stern oppressor of anything savouring of democracy, offered the reward it is not without significance that

138 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

the man who collected it is an avowed Socialist living in Neuköln, a manufacturing suburb of Berlin.

After Liebknecht was sentenced to five years' penal servitude in the summer of 1917, the chief remaining thorns in the thick side of autocracy have been Haase and Dittmann. Haase impressed me as the most able man among the German Socialists; indeed, he is one of the sharpest minds I have ever encountered. He has a poise that the impetuous Liebknecht lacked, which has enabled him somehow to work within the drastic German law. Dittmann, honest in his convictions, and fearless in his denunciation, had been dogged by detectives since late 1916 when he delivered his scathing attack in the Reichstag upon the reign of terror system of preventive arrest.* They got him on a technicality during the quickly-suppressed riots of February, 1918, which enabled them to put him out of the way for five years.

His colleague, Deputy Bauer, who enjoys the enviable distinction of having had more speeches suppressed than any other member, aptly summarised the situation when he said in June, 1918: "The Censorship is becoming more and more the instrument of annexationists and stand-patters on political reform. In Breslau the general in command not only prohibits public democratic gatherings, but refuses to allow party members to meet in one another's homes. The party's local secretary was even proceeded against by the army authorities because he forwarded to them a petition by the wives of soldiers. In my own case, the commanding general has made it impossible for me to speak to

*For this dramatic and informative speech, see "The Land of Deepening Shadow"—Chapter XV.

my own constituents. On the other hand, the campaign of the annexationists is officially encouraged."

The common idea in Great Britain and the United States that the Germans as a whole are yearning for a democracy such as ours is in direct contradiction to the case. We have flaws to which the German authorities spare no pains to draw the attention of their subjects. These flaws gain added weight in German minds through the fact that for upwards of four years they have been somewhat more than holding the rest of the world at bay. Until a man sets his heart on something difficult to attain and makes up his mind that he will do everything to attain it, his achievements will not be great. So it is with a whole people. The Germans this far have a confused idea as to how much they really want democracy. They are still clannish amongst the nations. There are less "internationalists" among their Socialists than among the Socialists of other countries. The Germans as a whole want no more drastic political reforms than those I discussed in the last chapter.

Even the extremely broad-minded and able Professor Delbrück, whose independent tendencies led to his resignation as Minister of the Interior in 1916, wrote in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* a year later:

"The belief that the great democracies of the West are real and genuine democracies is still cherished by many people, but those who see deeper have long recognised that that is an error. These so-called democracies are in reality governed by groups of professional politicians, capitalists, newspaper proprietors, and journalists. The influence of the people is very small, and if we in Germany also went over to the system of Parlia-

140 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

mentarisms, we should not increase but diminish the influence which the people has hitherto exerted upon the Government.

"Just as we shall remove the article in the Constitution which blocks the way to the Ministry to Parliamentarism as such, the English will remove the rule that every Minister must have a seat in Parliament. The English Government already has five or six members who do not own their rise to a Parliamentary career—Geddes, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Fisher, the distinguished historian and Minister of Education, and others. In a certain sense General Smuts, statesman and soldier, who has been given an influential advisory position in the English War Cabinet, belongs to the same class. Thus in the hour of need the Mother Country of Parliamentarism has summoned the best men from the free professions, and done so because they were men who enjoyed public confidence."

What would be the result if the masses of the people could show their sentiments at the polls?—you may wonder. After nearly four years of war they did so at the by-election in the Saxon political contest to elect a member of the Reichstag to succeed a Socialist who had died. The district is mostly manufacturing and has been described as "red."

There were two candidates. The first, of the Socialist Majority, stood with his party behind the war machine and against President Wilson's distinction between the German people and the German Government. His opponent, an Independent Socialist, stood on a platform which, since March, 1916, has registered itself consistently against militarism and is largely in favour of President Wilson's distinction. He was snowed under by the "tame" Socialist by 12,400 votes to 4,800.

In the day by day conception of the war we are actually fighting practically every German in Germany—and a few million even more dangerous Germans outside their country's present military frontiers. But in the broader conception, which a constructive statesman should correctly take, we are fighting the German people only until they realise that we have the power to back up our determination to tolerate no further their anachronistic, bureaucratised feudalism, which is a menace simply because they in their efficient tens of millions support it.

The Wilsonian policy of making a distinction is, therefore, in its deeper aspects, entirely correct.

There is nothing the matter with the Wilson wedge. But just as the wedge of iron will not split wood without the blows of a hammer, so will the wedge of diplomacy not rend the German people from their rulers unless driven by the smashes of blockade, armies, guns and shells.

That President Wilson understands this clearly is evidenced by his Baltimore speech of "force to the utmost." That he realises also that even the extreme case may arise that the wedge may not entirely succeed and the wood have to be reduced to pulp is the sentiment expressed at the tomb of Washington on July 4, 1918, when he demanded "the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately and secretly and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world; or if it cannot be presently destroyed, its virtual reduction to impotence."

I have seen German soldiers visibly tremble at the knees and look terrified in the presence of officers and officials whom they fear. One wonders at such times

142 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

that they have backbone enough to enable them to keep their bodies rigid. Yet these same soldiers, when ordered by their officers and officials, will storm against Allied entrenched positions and fight like demons. There is a deep moral in this for the student of philosophy and of the war.

The German people will not revolt until they are made to feel that there is a greater force outside in the world than that force of which they form a part and which they have been taught since childhood is irresistible.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE

ISN'T it wonderful how the Germans continue to hold out!" is a remark I hear frequently in the Allied countries. Sometimes it is said cynically of one's own efforts, and sometimes with pure admiration.

There is little wonderful about it. A consideration of the facts of the case in proper perspective show that most of the miracles enabling Germany to hold out have been performed by the Allies.

At the outbreak of the war there were two great offensive forces in existence—forces counted upon to make their respective sides victorious. One was the German Army; the other, the British Navy.

The latter was not necessarily an offensive force in the sense that it would demolish the German Navy and German ports, but in the still greater sense that its full application in completely cutting Germany from all overseas supplies would, with the blockading effect of Russia in the East, inevitably strangle Germany if she could not win in a short war.

Just as the neutral countries of Belgium and Luxemburg restricted—on paper—the full use of Germany's military power, so did another set of neutral countries restrict the use of Britain's naval power.

The essential, history-making fact, however, is that Germany secured a tremendous material advantage at

144 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

the very outset by scrapping her agreements, whereas Britain sought to adhere to hers. This is point number one for the Isn't-it-wonderful's!

In Germany politics became the instrument of the Army, but in England the Navy became the instrument of politics. Great Britain jumped into the whirlpool of war with a leaden weight around her neck. And she attached it herself. This weight was the "Declaration of London." Men concerned with international politics, some naval officers, and the international smugglers developed since 1914, know what is meant by the Declaration of London. I find that most other people do not.

Briefly it was this: Sea Law had always been more or less vague. Attempts had been made at the Treaty of Paris in 1856 and at the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 to clear it up, but with little result. In order to arrive at an agreement, the British Government invited representatives of the United States, France, Russia, Italy, Japan, Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Netherlands and Spain to meet her representatives in conference in London. The result was the Declaration of London in 1909 which dealt precisely with blockade, contraband, unneutral service, destruction of neutral prizes, transfer to neutral flag, enemy character, neutral goods in vessels, convoy, resistance to search, and compensation.

One need but examine the various provisions, particularly those relating to contraband, to become thoroughly convinced that Great Britain's representatives were totally unable to foresee war with Germany. They signed the declaration, following which it passed the House of Commons. The House of Lords, more dis-

cerning, voted against it. Therefore it was not ratified, and consequently not legally binding on Great Britain.

Since the war began, some zealous English opponents of the statesmen of their Liberal party—the party which dominated British affairs from 1906 to 1915, and which has had a considerable share in them since—have stigmatised the 1909 pact as the “Sea Law Made in Germany,” which might lead to the inference that the British representatives at the Conference deliberately tried to aid Germany at the expense of their own country. It is unfair to say that this was their intention, although as events have since transpired, it certainly has been their accomplishment.

When inside the German Empire, I saw that country sink dangerously low economically, some of the provisions of the Declaration used to flare before my vision in letters of electricity.

Take contraband for example. Three kinds were specified, absolute, conditional, and non-contraband.

I Absolute Contraband:

1. Arms of all kinds, including arms for sporting purposes, and their distinctive component parts.
2. Projectiles, charges, and cartridges of all kinds, and their distinctive component parts.
3. Powder and explosives specially prepared for use in war.
4. Gun-mountings, limber boxes, limbers, military waggons, field forges, and their distinctive component parts.
5. Clothing and equipment of a distinctively military character.
6. All kinds of harness of a distinctively military character.

146 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

7. Saddle, draught, and pack animals suitable for use in war.

8. Articles of camp equipment, and their distinctive component parts.

9. Armour plates.

10. Warships, including boats, and their distinctive component parts of such a nature that they can only be used on a vessel of war.

11. Implements and apparatus designed exclusively for the manufacture of munitions of war, for the manufacture or repair of arms, or war material for use on land or sea.

II *Conditional contraband.* This includes articles which may or may not be used for purposes of war. They may, without notice, be treated as contraband of war, under the name of conditional contraband, and include:

1. Foodstuffs.

2. Forage and grain, suitable for feeding animals.

3. Clothing, fabrics for clothing, and boots and shoes, suitable for use in war.

4. Gold and silver in coin or bullion; paper money.

5. Vehicles of all kinds available for use in war, and their component parts.

6. Vessels, craft, and boats of all kinds; floating docks, parts of docks and their component parts.

7. Railway material, both fixed and rolling-stock, and material for telegraphs, wireless telegraphs, and telephones.

8. Balloons and flying machines and their distinctive component parts, together with accessories and ar-

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 147

ticles recognisable as intended for use in connection with balloons and flying machines.

9. Fuel; lubricants.

10. Powder and explosives not specially prepared for use in war.

11. Barbed wire and implements for fixing and cutting the same.

12. Horseshoes and shoeing materials.

13. Harness and saddlery.

14. Field-glasses, telescopes, chronometers, and all kinds of nautical instruments.

It is the non-contraband list which is the miracle. The Declaration reads:

III Non-contraband. Goods not susceptible of use in war may not be declared contraband of war. The following may not be declared contraband:

1. Raw cotton, wool, silk, jute, flax, hemp, and other raw materials of the textile industries, and yarns of the same.

2. Oil seeds and nuts; copra.

3. Rubber, resins, gums, and lacs; hops.

4. Raw hides and horns, bones, and ivory.

5. Natural and artificial manures, including nitrates and phosphates for agricultural purposes.

6. Metallic ores.

7. Earths, clays, lime, chalk, stones, including marble, bricks, slates, and tiles.

8. Chinaware and glass.

9. Paper and paper-making materials.

10. Soap, paint and colours, including articles exclusively used in their manufacture, and varnish.

148 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

11. Bleaching-powder, soda ash, caustic soda, salt cake, ammonia, and sulphate of copper.
12. Agricultural, mining, textile, and printing machinery.
13. Precious and semi-precious stones, pearls, mother-of-pearl, and coral.
14. Clocks and watches, other than chronometers.
15. Fashion and fancy goods.
16. Feathers of all kinds, hairs and bristles.
17. Articles of household furniture and decoration; office furniture and requisites.

Consider this list in the light of the facts of the war.

Cotton is used for propulsive ammunition, for army clothing and for automatic tires. Silk is used in making observation balloons, and flax in the wings of aeroplanes, yet the Government of Great Britain solemnly agreed that these articles *were not susceptible of use in war*. I emphasise Great Britain in the Declaration because of her rank as first sea power.

With respect to paragraph 2, I have seen notices in Germany exhorting the people to grow and gather such oil seeds as sun flower, poppy, linseed, nuts and cherry stones. I saw German agents pour into Holland with the result that the Dutch multiplied their importation of linseed by 10,000 per cent. Soaring also went their importation of copra.

Why should the average American show any interest in the bald statement that Holland had greatly increased her importation of copra?—As a rule, he doesn't. He is likely to, however, when he learns that copra is the dry pulp of cocoanut; that it is two-thirds

oil, and that like the other oleaginous materials just mentioned, it is vital to German power to make war.

This is a war of machinery in its practical operations, and the oils extracted from such materials are not only used for lubricating purposes, but are essentials in the manufacture of explosives. Consequently, Germany's long-continued success in importing oil-making products under the nose of the politically-shackled British fleet, directly results in additional tens of thousands of Britain's soldiery and America's soldiery sleeping in France and Flanders instead of returning to their homes.

Herr Batocki, as German Food Controller, testified to the Reichstag on May 10, '1917, when referring to imports: "*In the main we depend largely upon imports for our supplies of oils and fats. Our divinely-wise policy, however, has enabled us to accumulate enough to permit us to face the future with hope.*"

Superior transport has contributed largely to German military successes. Rubber plays a highly important role in modern transport. Further comment on that item in paragraph 3 would be superfluous.

In paragraph 5 we find artificial manures, including nitrates, for agricultural purposes. The bumper crops from Germany's scientifically intensive agriculture were due largely to the use of these. Furthermore, nitric acid is derived from nitrates, and properly combined with toluol makes TNT, one of the most terrible of high explosives.

In paragraph 6 we find the British Government agreeing with Germany that metallic ores are not susceptible of use in war. How about those used in steel-hardening to make the tool steel necessary for the manufacture

150 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

of munitions—hardeners such as tungsten, chromium, vanadium, and manganese?

In paragraph 9 we learn that paper-making materials are not to be considered as contraband of war. Wood pulp is the prime paper-making material. It happens also to be Germany's present munition-substitute for cotton, the cellulose derived from it forming the base of the charge that hurls German death-dealing projectiles across No-Man's Land. It would not be fair, however, to blame the British Government of 1909 for not foreseeing this, inasmuch as their best chemists were unorganised for peace; whereas those of Germany were organised for war.

Some of the chemicals in paragraph 11 are also of great value in the manufacture of explosives. Five pounds of fat treated with soda can be made to yield one pound of glycerine, which, like the glycerine derived from the seeds mentioned above, can be nitrated to yield twice the amount of nitroglycerine.

So much for the contraband, conditional-contraband and non-contraband classifications of the Declaration of London. Regarding seizure the Declaration says:

"Absolute contraband is liable to capture if it is shown to be destined to territory belonging to or occupied by the enemy, or to the armed forces of the enemy. It is immaterial whether the carriage of the goods is direct or entails transshipment or a subsequent transport by land.

"Where a vessel is carrying absolute contraband, her papers are conclusive proof as to the voyage on which she is engaged, unless she is found clearly out of the course indicated by her papers and unable to give adequate reasons to justify such deviation."

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 151

From this second paragraph it is clear that even though Great Britain enlarged her contraband list from the conditional contraband list, as she had a legal right to do, *contraband could reach Germany from America by Holland or Scandinavia if the ship's papers and the list of cargo consignees tended to show that the goods are destined for neutrals and not for the enemy. The burden of proof rested with the British.*

"Conditional contraband is not liable to capture, except when found on board a vessel bound for territory belonging to or occupied by the enemy, or for the armed forces of the enemy, and when it is not to be discharged in an intervening neutral port."

Note the qualifying clause *when it is not to be discharged in an intervening neutral port.* Thus though conditional contraband could not be sent to the manufacturing districts of the Rhine region via Bremen and Hamburg, it was quite all right to send it there via Amsterdam and Rotterdam. This was not a serious inconvenience to Germany, inasmuch as the rail haul from Hamburg to Cologne is 279 miles, and from Bremerhaven to Cologne 317 miles; whereas the distances from Rotterdam and Amsterdam respectively to Cologne are only 165 and 109 miles.

Thus, 'Clear for a neutral port!' became a maritime motto to such an extent that even Iceland proved useful in a war which, until America's entry, was at times waged largely on the quibblings of technical niceties.

These, then, are some of the essential provisions of a document which has been of infinitely more value to Germany than her high-seas fleet, and it cost only the

152 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

travelling and living expenses of the few delegates sent to the convention.

The British Foreign Office early in the war got into international difficulties by treating the Declaration of London as though it were ratified and binding—by accepting it practically *en bloc* and then nibbling into it in a way that soon caused friction with the various neutrals, chief of whom was the United States.

Washington's first sharp note of the war was to Great Britain and not to Germany when Secretary Bryan protested against British interference with neutral trade.

From the outbreak of war until March, 1915, all kinds of supplies poured into Germany like the tide in the flood—despite the holding up of shipping by the British Navy. The British Order in Council of March of that year, however, reduced the deluge to rivers which in return were reduced to brooks in the third year of the war. Not until we had entered the struggle and placed an embargo on this side of the ocean on goods sent to Germany through contiguous neutral countries did the brooks dry up at the source.

Yet, from the beginning, the overwhelming majority of the people of Great Britain and the United States thoroughly believed that Germany was being blockaded. They looked upon her as a great storehouse that could not be replenished from outside and was eating itself up. If the German Armies did not win before the storehouse was depleted, Germany must collapse.

Yet in the second year of the war such advertisements as the following were appearing in pro-German publications in the United States. Those opposite are reproduced from the October 13, 1915, issue of George Sylvester Viereck's Weekly, *The Fatherland*, which in the

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 153

same issue boasted: "Inasmuch as fully ninety per cent of the American people are *hyphenated*, *The Fatherland* is quite willing to be the spokesman for so impressive a majority."

The Fatherland Needs Coffee

Have you forgotten your friends and relatives in the old country? Coffee is not produced in Germany and consequently has become exceedingly scarce. These conditions have caused the price to raise far above the means of the majority of people and is causing untold discomfort to thousands of people who depend upon this beverage for daily use. Here is an opportunity to show that you have not forgotten them. Send them five pounds of our A1 quality coffee.

WE SHIP coffee to any part of Germany and Austria-Hungary—5 pounds of the best at \$1.85, including all postage and packing charges. If delivery does not take place, we refund money.

DO NOT HESITATE but send your order without delay, enclosing stamps or money order and full address of the person to whom you wish us to make the shipment. If you want to add a postal card telling who the gift is from, please enclose it with your order.

HAMBURG-AMERICAN COFFEE CO.

War Package Dept. { 12 HANOVER SQUARE } NEW YORK CITY
 76 WATER STREET
ONE BLOCK EAST OF HANOVER SQUARE "L" STATION

There were two reasons for the popular belief that Germany was being blockaded:

1. The natural supposition that Great Britain would

WAR PACKAGE

for Germany and Austria-Hungary

Delivered from our business house in Rotterdam, Holland, to any address, including the trenches—

10 lb. Package of first-class groceries consists of:—

2 LBS. CERVATAT SAUSAGE 2 LBS. LIVER PIE 2 LBS. COCOA
2 LBS. VEAL PIE 2 LBS. COFFEE

This Package is delivered for the Price of \$4.90

5 lb. Package includes the above-mentioned foods in 1-lb. lots—is delivered for \$2.90

100 of the best Dutch Cigars are delivered to the trenches for \$4.20

Arrival guaranteed. The above prices include all charges of postage, packing and delivery. Send money-order or check and state address of the sender and the person to whom the goods are consigned.

War Package Dept., International Import and Export Commission Syndicate
2 and 4 Stone Street Telephone Broad 1159 New York City

use her sea power to the utmost. The truth is she had the name without the game.

2. The sepulchral stillness in Germany and among neutrals concerning the stuff that went through the

154 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

blockade;* and the howl put up when anything was stopped. Indeed, I soon learned that Britain's interference and fancied interference with the trading rights of neutrals was Germany's chief propaganda card—a card of dissension played with telling effect in the United States.

Thus, while the German Government was scrapping two Hague conventions and two neutrality agreements, which it had ratified, it insisted to the world that Great Britain should adhere to the Declaration of London, which it had not ratified.

Happily, Germany's ruthless submarine declaration of February, 1915, made the British Foreign Office feel that we might condone a further tightening of the strings. As a matter of fact, though we protested from time to time, we could not be over-insistent and drastic owing to Germany's peculiar custom of perpetrating some fresh sea atrocity whenever Anglo-American relations threatened to become acute. Even some well-informed Germans who deplored the sinking of the *Lusitania* on practical grounds, admitted this point to me.

Through 1915 Great Britain developed a policy with Scandinavia and Holland which reduced their re-exports into Germany. Germany unconsciously aided her in this by flamboyantly holding dye-stuffs over the heads of her neutral neighbours for bargaining purposes. She furthermore informed them that if they allowed any of these products of her monopolised industry of which she was so proud to be re-exported they would be *strafed*. Acting on this cue, Great Britain told Sweden, for ex-

* I use "blockade" in the broad sense, not the strictly legal sense.

ample, that if she permitted products which she imported from the British Empire to reach Germany, she would get no more of these. Britain then began to swell her contraband list and began more strictly to enforce her Order in Council of March 11, 1915, which declared that no commodities of any kind would be allowed to reach Germany. Thus, under pressure, from both sets of belligerents, the Swedish Government compiled a list of things which might not be re-exported.

At the end of the first year of war, this embargo list had grown to nine pages of fine print. Thence began, unobserved by the world in general, the dramatic and vital struggle on the great silent battlefields of the Neutral North.

The gorgeous, world-renowned Grand Hotel in Stockholm was to all appearances turned into a stock-exchange over night. I saw knots of men put their heads together in the lobby to discuss any kind of a business transaction from the collecting of junk to the purchase of an oil ship. Other groups sat in whispered discussions behind locked doors, messenger boys darted through the corridors, while telephones tingled incessantly in the rooms throughout the great hotel. The atmosphere was that of Wall Street or of the Wheat Pit of Chicago.

The Continental produced a similar scene, as did the other hotels to a lesser degree. Hordes of Germans, trying to buy and get their goods home to their respective country, Englishmen seeking to forestall the one and aid the other, while a sprinkling of neutrals garnered all the way from San Francisco to Teheran, were taking a hand in the biggest game that Stockholm ever knew.

156 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Germany played her cards with characteristic thoroughness. As we have seen, her system of government enables her heads of departments speedily to enlist the services of experts in any new line. Thus her machinery for beating the blockade developed with the blockade. She didn't pick out men for drawing-room connections but because they could get results; and the shrewd buyers and traders that she sent into Sweden and other neutral countries had the Imperial Government at their backs to enable them to go the limit. In Scandinavia, Switzerland, Holland, and Roumania, I was impressed with the great proportion of shrewd and able Jewish business men among her agents. The blockade was not a side-show with them and the Government department in which they worked. It was their highly developed scientific specialty.

In the game of beating the embargo buying soon became a comparatively simple matter compared with the delivery of goods. Once a Scandinavian country placed a commodity on the embargo list, it could only be smuggled out to Germany by crooked means. That such means existed in plenitude I learned first-hand in my associations with smugglers. I soon saw that one of the commodities most desired by Germany was cotton, which Sweden did not feel constrained to place on her embargo list until June 6, 1915. The British Government had not yet declared cotton contraband, although a portion of the Press was incessantly hammering it on the subject.

While Parliament debated the question, and the Cabinet considered it, I saw the German ring of cotton buyers in Stockholm quadruple their efforts. On one occasion, after a pleasant chat on the Grand Hotel ve-

randa with a neutral diplomat and a well-known American cotton king who was just then making a tour of Europe to inspect his cotton interests, I stepped inside and was accosted by three Jews who were fighting Germany's trade battles on the Swedish front. I had already talked with these men several times, and if I had entertained any doubts of the nature of their activities these doubts were now dispelled.

"Who was the strange gentleman to whom you were talking just now on the veranda?" asked one of them.

"He is one of the greatest cotton men in America," I returned with warmth.

I shall never forget the devouringly eager manner of the three men at my simple announcement. They came at me with outstretched arms. "Introduce us!" "Introduce us!" they pleaded in unison.

It is significant that this was in late July, nearly two months after cotton could not be taken out of the country—that is, according to Swedish regulations.

But such trifles as regulations did not discourage my three acquaintances. After they bought a load of cotton at Gothenburg, on the west coast of Sweden, they decided to take it to Stockholm on the east coast. They could do this inasmuch as there was nothing against transferring it in the country. They preferred the long route by boat rather than the short route by rail—a preference which under existing war-conditions was not to save transportation rates. A code message to Berlin, a German destroyer at the right place in the Baltic, and the embargo was beaten. The Germans took the cotton, released the boat, and the two started the trick all over again.

I found two gangs working together in a decidedly

158 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

clever scheme in Copenhagen and Stockholm. They specialised in many commodities, but particularly in rubber. A German-controlled firm in Denmark would receive a consignment of rubber from New York. It had stipulated with the Danish Government that it would not re-export this rubber to Germany, the Danish Government having already in an agreement with Great Britain placed rubber upon the embargo list. Permission could be obtained, however, by the firm in Denmark to ship this rubber to its branch firm in Stockholm. When it arrived in Stockholm, it would be re-boxed and labelled and sent to Germany, passing through Denmark. It could be sent from Sweden inasmuch as it had not come to that country from over the seas, and was merely passing through that country in transit bond.

From the outset of the war, Germany sought to purchase every ounce of copper in Sweden, as elsewhere, and numbers of Swedes naturally accepted the high prices offered, some manufacturers, indeed, running temporarily short themselves. The director of one of the largest paper mills told me that he was continually pestered by German agents trying to buy all kinds of scrap metal, especially copper. He added that they did not stop with the owners, but offered the workmen alluring prices for any bits of metal that they could smuggle out of the factories. He said that the practice went so far that most managers had to employ squads of watchmen in order to retain possession of lighting and other appurtenances.

One German attempt at smuggling shows that somebody somewhere had a deep sense of humour. During the great offensive against the Russians, Hindenburg's

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 159

popularity increased to such an extent that Germany ordered several hundred thousand busts of him in Sweden for early delivery. The busts, she specified, were to be of copper. When Britain's watch dogs in Sweden heard of this, they showed their teeth. They did not object to Germany honouring her great man by placing a statuette of him in every home in the Fatherland, but they did insist that if the statuettes were to come from Sweden they would have to be of wood, papier-mâché, or some other innocuous substance.

Though this attempt to nip in the bud the Germans succeeded in importing quantities of "onions" made of rubber and Dutch "herrings" moulded from putty and deceptively coated.

Later, when I was again in the Fatherland, there came a time when shortages became more owing to the lack of proper machinery for my soap due to fat shortage, and the failure to get it from America,—where by consensus of European opinion the best in the world is made. Such failure was due to the embargo which European neutrals, under British pressure, put on soap. After many uncomfortable months, my friends and I suddenly discovered that we could no longer get the real article from America in German cities. On opening the boxes, however, we found all the instructions printed in Norwegian, Swedish and Danish. Somewhere in the north had broken the embargo with a diplomatic flourish.

When as the governments of the Scandinavian countries dealt with Great Britain directly in the compilation of their embargo lists, quite a different system pertained in the north. The mission known as the Netherlands Oversea List was established at the

160 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Hague in the autumn of 1914 to act as intermediary between Dutch merchants and traders and the Entente Powers. Their proposition, reduced to simplest terms, was that the Allies should permit goods to enter Holland under the sanction of the N. O. T. which in turn should be responsible for them not going into Germany.

The organisation is managed by a board of directors, appointed and dismissed by the shareholders, the latter consisting of the most powerful business concerns in Holland, as the Holland-American line, the Amsterdam Bank and the Netherlands Lloyd. The method of operation was simple and *theoretically* prevented the re-exportation to Germany of goods brought into the country through the medium of the N. O. T. Most of the imports were brought through it anyhow, since the Government concerned itself only with such absolute contraband as arms, ammunition, and the like.

If a Dutch merchant desired to import a certain commodity, he filled in a form issued by the Oversea Trust, the officials of which were then supposed to ascertain whether he was a bona fide Dutch merchant or a link in the German chain. Permission granted, he had to furnish the Trust with a bank guarantee to the amount of goods ordered, this being a forfeit or a part-forfeit, should the goods be re-exported.

The deposit, however, proved far from an absolute guarantee of good behaviour. Some dealers in oil, for example, imported a vast amount and then reshipped it all to Germany. Inasmuch as Germany needs lubricants to win the war, and her leaders are determined to let nothing stand in the way of victory, she paid a price sufficient to allow the Dutch dealers to sacrifice their

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 161

entire deposit to the Oversea Trust and still clear a handsome profit.

It must be remembered that the Overseas Trust had no official connection with the Dutch Government. This proved a grievous weakness from the Allied point of view inasmuch as the Netherlands government officials on the frontier had no power to hold up goods with the N. O. T. label. The N. O. T.'s only recourse was to find the original exporter, *if it had proof that goods left the country*, and refuse him any further permission to import. The German agents met this little difficulty by simply growing more mushroom importers.

Holland developed an export as well as a re-export problem. Early in the war the Dutch farmers took full advantage of the phenomenon that they could get three times as much by selling produce to the Germans as to their own countrymen. These farmers were soon driving in cheerfully every week to Rotterdam, Gouda, and other centres, where they took pride in displaying fat rolls of money in the coffee-houses before strolling across the street to pass them through the window to the receiving teller in the bank. Quite a change from the days when the ancestors of the get-rich-quick farmers began to reclaim the land from the sea, a period when more people were employed in manuring it than could be fed on what it produced.

The flow of milk, cheese, butter, eggs, meat, potatoes and other vegetables to Germany, caused the consumers in the cities to complain bitterly that not only were the prices of the necessities of life nearly prohibitive, but that food could not be obtained in sufficient quantities. Forced to take measures, the Government decreed that every town should each week take an account of sup-

162 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

plies on hand on the basis of which the percentage of the country's produce which might be exported might be computed.

All over the world, however, there are just as clever people trying to beat the law as to make the law, and it would be as much beside the point to argue that because there existed in Holland regulation against exports and re-exports that "banned" goods did not go out of the country as to maintain that moonshine whiskey is not distilled in the mountains of Kentucky because of federal excise laws.

As regards the partial replenishment of the German national storehouse, I got quite a different and extremely more accurate idea out where things were doing than I should have got as one of the British public reading the official assurances that the enemy was being blockaded. She was *on paper*. On both sides of the Dutch frontier, however, I was amazed at the amount of sustenance that Germany was sucking from Holland.

In this I witnessed further evidence of Teuton thoroughness in neglecting no detail. Gangs of smugglers were all over Holland. One of these, with its headquarters at Roosendaal, used to send a stream of people, even young boys, across the line into Belgium in broad daylight. Women and girls were particularly active, the wide full skirts of the Dutch peasant becoming wider and fuller with contraband sewed in them.

Some smugglers were merely employés of the German agents, while others, more enterprising, were in business for themselves. I know of one young fellow in Rotterdam who drew every cent that he had in the bank early in 1915 and spent it all for one horse. He

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 163

then surreptitiously led the animal across the frontier where he received two and one-half times what he had paid for it. He encored the act repeatedly and might have become wealthy if the authorities had not finally stopped his activities by banishing him from the frontier zones. As it was he cleared \$32,000 in less than a year.

Many other Dutchmen increased the value of their horses by leading them in an easterly direction. An animal worth 400 guilders (a guilder equals forty cents) on one side of the line, was worth 1,000 guilders on the other. Two hundred guilders appears a large sum of money to a weary, neutral frontier-guard if he will but look in a specified direction for a specified length of time. His country is not at war, he may consolingly reason, and what does it matter if just one more horse is turned loose into Armageddon.

In addition to the "honest" smuggler there has existed the dealer who cheats his confiding German customer. This happened so often that the German authorities warned their people to beware of the wily Dutchman. Many German purchasers of kerosene and gasoline had the unpleasant truth dawn upon them later that they paid exorbitant prices for ordinary water topped with oil.

As from Scandinavia and Holland, food and supplies poured into the central powers from Switzerland, Roumania and Italy. Italy, indeed, presented the most difficult problem. Inasmuch as the Allies hoped that she would enter the war the British blockade authorities closed their eyes to her imports and exports. Thus from August, 1914, until late May, 1915, Genoa was a revictualment port for the Central Powers. Even

164 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

after Italy came into the war, there was a considerable leakage via Switzerland which was only stopped with the rebirth of the nation in the autumn of 1917 when her retreating armies successfully turned at bay on the Piave River and the rot in politics was largely cleared away.

I was in Germany in February, 1916, at the time Lord Robert Cecil was appointed Minister of Blockade, when I found deeply significant the chagrin of many well-informed Germans that Great Britain had now, seemingly, determined to make blockade a deeper study than in the past. Some months later, when the news was published in Germany that Britain had resolved to cast off entirely the Declaration of London, I saw one of the greatest rage-waves sweep through Germany of the many that I witnessed during the war, for the Germans knew the importance of the muffled battle for food-stuffs and material. As General Rubisanen, commanding at Soltau, blurted out to three of us Americans, whose country he had just been villifying: "God in heaven, what a terrible thought! To think that all the soldiers of the world could never defeat the German Army, and then to realise that we are on the verge of overwhelming defeat if our economic line but sag a little lower."

This was in the summer of 1916, when what I saw in Germany made me realise the possibilities of a complete blockade. Partially paralysed as it was, the sea power of Great Britain was literally reducing Germany's hopes to a far greater extent than were all the armies of the Allies.

I got out of Germany into Holland in the autumn and contrived to cross the North Sea to England. I found

there a people for the most part focussing their eyes on one great phase of the war—the Battle of the Somme. They believed that their Government had plugged up all the leaks in the blockade. In Germany I had seen the leaks, and I was thoroughly convinced that the blockade could be tightened and must be tightened if the Central Powers were ever to be defeated.

Among other defects, I called attention in the London *Times* to the fact that Holland and Denmark were importing under the nose of the British fleet soy beans from Japan to fatten pigs; oil cake from America to fatten cattle; also, maize and other cereals from across the seas for the same purpose. Turned into meat, these imports then passed into Germany. "There is one man from Denmark whom we always hate to see coming to our shores," said an important British naval officer to me. "He always returns home with new concessions from our Foreign Office—which usually means something more for Germany."

On the 15th of November, 1916, Lord Beresford said in Parliament: "Great Britain has arrived at a very serious crisis. The Government seems to think they are going to win the war by some lucky chance; but all previous wars were won by energy, foresight and attack. The one thing the Germans feared was our blockade, and I will quote an excellent article in the *Times*—by Mr. D. Thomas Curtin—which cited the following words uttered by a prominent German.

"When the war began we thought it would be a fight between the German Army and the British Navy. As time went on we found that the English Government drew the teeth of its Navy and enabled us to get in through the then so-called blockade supplies of cotton,

166 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

copper, lubricating oil, wool"—(here he named some twenty commodities)—"in a sufficiency that will last us many long months. How different would have been our position to-day if the British Navy had controlled the blockade, as we had every reason to fear it would. We can and will hold out for a long time, thanks to their blunders."

This member of the German Foreign Office further told me that he was at a loss to understand why Great Britain had not exercised her sea power to the utmost. Of course, as a German official, it was difficult for him to understand a deference to neutrals which might wreck one's cause. *In justice to the British Foreign Office, it is fair to state that just such deference to the United States was responsible for the continued chaining of the fleet.*

When we came in, we created a Board of Blockade, and began to ration European neutrals in such a manner that there would be no surplus to pass over their frontiers to the enemy. Thus in the summer of 1917 Germany was completely choked off from the seas, and the illusion which the average American had cherished for three years had become a reality. But though the barriers went down in the west, they were lifted in the east—just another chapter in the story of German resistance.

One of Germany's greatest war advantages is that she dominates her alliance and that she in turn is dominated by the most determined *collection* of men in the world—rendered partly so by the fact that their whole system is staked on winning. *These men have been enabled to bring the maximum strength of their alliance*

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 167

to bear at any given time, whereas the Allies have been fighting the enemy fractionally and serially.

In the first place, for example, the British Navy was leashed, as I have shown.

Secondly, the French army engaged the bulk of the German army while Britain built up her military forces.

Thirdly, when the British army had reached its maximum striking power the armies of France had, because of enormous losses, passed their maximum offensive power.

Fourthly, when Russia was actively engaged in the war we were not.

Fifthly, when we are in the war, Russia is out.

In short, those who attribute Germany's resistance to the miraculous should bear in mind that though she may be said to be fighting the whole world she does not have to fight it all at once.

Furthermore, her leaders are enabled through their system of government to make use of every scrap, human and material, that they can muster—legless soldiers mend uniforms; prostitutes are not given free rein to put German soldiers out of action but are rounded up to fill cartridges to put Allied soldiers out of action; the children are mobilised for countless collections, and so on.

No heads of state have such a simple problem in one respect as those of Germany. The only question before them on any contemplated measure is: Will it benefit the empire? If it will, their government machinery usually permits them to put it immediately into operation in the form of a military or police order, and the public unquestionably obeys. In parliamentary countries, dis-

168 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

cussions by a wide field of men, most of them not experts, are generally necessary.

In London, for example, there has been considerable agitation among both the military and the civil authorities for nearly four years to solve the street-walking problem. In the meantime, Coventry Street, leading from Piccadilly Circus to Leicester Square, has developed into what one prominent Englishman calls "the vilest thoroughfare in the world." In this matter the English characteristic of freedom of the individual is carried too far.

In London, I found some American army doctors who believed that they had come to Europe to treat wounded men within sound of the guns, and who were unpleasantly surprised when they found themselves working to their utmost in military hospitals for venereal disease, so great is the havoc wrought by the army of women whose sole interest in the war is in the uniformed patronage it brings them. Under the German system of government a stroke of the military pen would change these women from a debit to an asset for waging war.

"Only a side issue," you may say. Well, it is by adding up a few score of these seemingly side-issues that you begin to get down to the reason why Germany continues to stagger the globe.

As in national questions, so in international, the decision rests upon, "Will it benefit the Empire?" Belgium is the shining example of such policy. In considering a question of German ability to hold out, however, it is necessary to include what Germany did after she got into Belgium. In order to pay for her huge imports, she had to give up some of her cherished gold; but she also exchanged commodities, the chief of which

were coal and manufactured steel products. Some of the coal and iron was her own, to be sure, but a great amount came from the occupied districts of France and Belgium. *Now, Belgian coal, dug by Belgian miners, under the supervision of the invader—these miners, fed by Belgian relief supplies donated by Germany's enemies and neutrals—exchanged for meat and oil from Holland or wood pulp from Sweden, made no strain upon German national resources as they existed up to the beginning of the war.*

When Hindenburg became Generalissimo, he made such a comb-out among civilians for new levies that I found Germany looking like mobilisation days all over again. But Hindenburg went too far, for he weakened the economic life that sustained the armies. All the prisoners were working under driving pressure as were most of the women, but these did not suffice. So the German leaders looked about, saw a way out of the difficulty, threw another Hague agreement to the winds and organised their colossal slave-raids in Belgium and France. This was not an isolated piece of Prussian brutality, as it is generally viewed, but a distinct link in the chain of German resistance. Once more Germany's necessity, or supposed necessity, had become the sole determinant.

Nevertheless, under the wastage and wear of an ever-growing war, the German labour shortage had again become acute in 1918. After tapping the "liberated" provinces, the Kaiser's efficiency directors once more looked about and became convinced that some German women were not doing *real* war-work. They therefore planned the activities desired and legislated—or let us more correctly say, commanded—that the wives of Ger-

170 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

man soldiers who refuse to do what the Government suggests, shall have their separation allowances annulled, and that other women who can not be affected in this way, shall be denied the food cards which stand between them and starvation if they refuse Government work. This simply means that all German women can now be legally compelled to do the work of blacksmiths or oxen for ten or twelve hours a day.

The almost negligible minority among us who petulantly declare they might just as well be under the Kaiser when they threaten to strike for "five eight-hour days per week, and double-time for Saturdays," would do well to bear in mind this gentle German device in regard to labour as well as low wages, long hours, and machine-gun antidotes for strikes.

But all this is part of *German efficiency*. To the leaders the war is a material thing; therefore, to neglect to employ all available material, is something beyond their comprehension. They believe, and have educated their people to believe, that everything must be done to win the war since Germany's whole future, which includes their material happiness, and that of their children, is entirely dependent upon the outcome of the struggle. In the details given in this chapter and in all details connected with the war, the Germans are always out to win.

In this respect my mind goes back to a little incident in the retreat from Antwerp. I was wondering where, when and how the Belgians could hold up the German onslaught, when in the night I came upon little knots of men in sailor hats, footsore, confessedly bewildered, but cheery and thoroughly game. These men of the British Naval Reserve were some of the best fel-

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 171

lows I have met during the past four years, but they would be the last to assert that they had been in the least prepared to hold back the scientific, highly-trained army against them. Some of the fragments of conversation linger with me now,—fragments uttered while we stumbled along in the dark before the enemy.

"So you have been travelling around a bit," said one to me. "What is the news about the war?" The spotlight of the interest of the world was focussed on us, but such is the complexity of the great struggle that a perspective is not always easy.

They made no excuses for the fact that they were retreating instead of advancing, and they told me in a straightforward manner of how the Germans had got the best of their particular group. All war was new to them, and they spoke only with interest and not with reproach. At dawn they saw the enemy advancing under a white flag. Apparently they did not consider it in the least extraordinary that the flag had to be escorted by whole companies. At length the Germans substituted the red, white and black for the flag of white and rushed the fort. *Sauve qui peut* rang out, and the little group escaped. These men somehow reminded me of an American college football team after a hard game, as they moved along bunched together with their coats thrown jauntily over their shoulders like blankets. But they had had a first-hand lesson that *Germany is not playing football or cricket. From first to last she is out with the gloves off to win the war, and if she fails, it will not be through lack of trying every device of science, ingenuity, and trickery on her fronts, behind her fronts, and behind her enemies' fronts.*

"Germany simply can't win," I heard one night after

172 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

my return to New York. "Nineteen nations are at war against her,"—this said with a tone of finality which left me in no doubt of the speaker's opinion that "nineteen to one" was the keynote to success.

The phenomenon that most important governments of the world have broken with Germany, is not only an ethical barometer, but it can be turned to practical use.

For the moment, however, let us consider the misleading sure-cure prescription of nineteen-to-one—or twenty-three according to later score. If we carefully count up Siam and Nicaragua among the forces battering Germany, is it quite correct to omit those nations battling by her side? Austria-Hungary, with eleven million more people than France, entered the war with an army second only to that of Germany in the completeness of its equipment and the definiteness of its plan. Are we to leave out of account its vast, natural resources and the thundering arsenals of Scoda, which rival those of Krupp? The Bulgars, a hardy-peasant soldiery, more than self-sustaining, are tying up and inflicting losses upon considerable allied forces in Macedonia—forces which are unavailable for the decisive battles in France. Britain's foremost military critic has clung to the principle since the beginning that this is a war of attrition in which the killing of Germans is the prime essential.

Did the tens of thousands of some of the finest soldiers of the British Empire kill any Germans when they went down before the Sultan's armies in the Dardanelles? Or are British soldiers killing Germans in Palestine and Mesopotamia? Then why leave Turkey out of the count? Moreover, Germany continues to get lim-

SECRET OF GERMAN RESISTANCE 173

ited supplies of much-needed cotton and wool from the Turkish Empire.

The "one," then, is inaccurate in the nineteen-to-one argument.

What about the nineteen?

Has each been concentrating every scrap of energy, human and material, upon the one purpose of winning the war? That is what Germany and her Prussianised allies have been doing.

In brief, has Germany been fighting all the forces that the world might have brought against her, or has she been fighting a collection of fractional forces?

CHAPTER VII

THE DECISIVE WEAPON

THE cave man met his opponent face to face and fought him with his hands, and his feet, and his teeth. Less primitive, he fashioned a hammer of stone which aided him in the settlement of differences of opinion. Later, the spear enabled him to slay before his opponent could grapple with him. The arrow increased the area of combat, until along came the man with the gun who killed from safe distance the savage with the bow. The cannon developed range until aimed by intricate mathematical formulæ it enables civilised man to kill those whom he never knew and never saw.

As the world becomes increasingly complex, so does war. In the beginning, men fought singly, then in groups, then in armies, then in whole nations and combinations of nations. War on sea became as important as war on land and was united to it. In the third century before Christ, in the first of the three acts of the death struggle between Rome and Carthage, the Romans, confining their operations to land, saw that they had no chance of success until they built a fleet to prevent the enemy's ships harassing their coast. They took as a model a Carthaginian ship which was wrecked on their shores and built up the fleet that enabled them to grapple with the seamen from Africa.

Had Rome not imitated the superior weapon of her

enemy, the history of the world would have been different. So it has been through the ages. In the weapons of war, one must catch up or go under. For a few days the outcome of our Civil War centred largely upon the new idea of armouring ships. Had the North conservatively stuck to the wooden variety, the future would have been materially altered. That it is not was due to the counter-armour device of Ericsson's *Monitor*.

In the present war, Germany almost cleared the way to the Channel ports by the use of a weapon which she had solemnly sworn at the Second Hague Conference of 1907 not to use. Horror and denunciation of her use of gas swelled throughout the world. Yet the enemies of Germany quickly resorted to it for the simple reason that to stick to an agreement which the other fellow had violated and thus obtained a tremendous material advantage, might result in being worn down and being defeated in the field in the long run.

Germany's guilt in using poisonous gas was not that she caused suffering and death, for all war does that; but that she broke an agreement. She is first and last out to win and is determined to use all her weapons to the fullest. We must do likewise. This does not mean that we should resort to debasing tactics. We should not seek to emulate the cases of the sinking of the *Belgian Prince* and the murder of Captain Fryatt. But in the nature of this war both sides have certain advantages. If one side utilises to the fullest its advantages, while the other side fails to do so, the latter stands an excellent chance to awaken some day to the realisation that it has poured out its blood and treasure to little purpose; and, too late, to say, "It might have been!"

We have seen in the last chapter the result of the

176 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Allies' inability to use their sea weapon to the utmost from the very beginning. Let us take two extreme cases: First, suppose that all the nations that are and have been the enemy of Germany during the past four years could have seen that she was an enemy to them all and must be beaten. Acting upon this, suppose that all of these had immediately jumped in, cut Germany off from the outside, and set wholeheartedly to work to rain sledge-hammer blows upon her. Under such circumstances, even the pan-German fire-eating Count Reventlow would long ago have admitted that his country had not the shadow of a chance.

Let us now consider the other extreme—the extreme which might have happened had the German leaders been less drunk with German power, more knowing in the psychology of other peoples and consequently less ignorant of the limits of intimidation. Suppose that Great Britain had continued rigidly to adhere to the Declaration of London and Germany had continued her importations. There are some who would have said that Great Britain had played a good sporting game in adhering to the sea rules formulated in 1909. Possibly true. But this solace would be a poor substitute for the Allied cause which would inevitably have gone down to defeat.

In the fifth year of war, we may look back with regret that we could not have had the gift of vision to have hammered Germany all together. But on the other hand, the facts as they are justify us in expectations of victory if we use all our weapons to the fullest. We hold the cards. All we need do is play them correctly.

I have seen the food supply diminish in all the warring nations of Europe. Yet in this respect, I find it

highly significant that Germany and Austria were vastly worse off at the end of the second year of war than England and France at the end of the fourth. Although Germany's low food line of the third year of war has been jacked up sufficiently to prevent it falling much further it continues along the frontier between discomfort and defeat.

Herr Batoeki, former Food Controller, and now Governor of the agrarian province of East Prussia, was forced to throw light upon the situation in June, 1918, when he defended the official methods of distribution. He said:

"The cutting off of Germany from world-trade becomes ever more effective, and this, combined with often unfavourable harvest weather in Germany, in the countries of our allies, and in the occupied territories, makes the system of feeding the Army and the non-agricultural population appear as an indispensable emergency bridge which, artificially put together, narrow, and shaky though it is, provides a way across the abyss of destruction. The bridge is supported by three principal pillars—bread, potatoes, and corn fodder for the horses, needed by the Army and by industry. If one of these pillars breaks, Germany will fall into the abyss and succumb to the terrible fate which our Anglo-Saxon enemies and their vassals have prepared for us. Every year the pillars begin, in the last months before the harvest, to shake and crack.

"The first business of the public food control is to seize supplies as completely as possible, to prevent all unnecessary consumption of food as fodder, and rightly to distribute the bread cereals, the fodder cereals, and the potatoes during the critical last months of the year, so as to prevent the cracking and shaking of the pillars

178 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

from ending in collapse. Every year thus far we have been able to do this, although with great difficulty, and we shall be able to go on doing it with the help of God and our good sword, which has always at the right time—in the Balkans, then in Roumania, and this time by the Eastern peace—opened up fresh possibilities of supply, although the supplies for the present flow but scantily.”

Herr Batocki's remarks, then, officially confirm the precarious food conditions I saw in Germany. It is clearly evident that the “cracking and shaking of the pillars” would indeed have ended in collapse had Germany really been blockaded from the beginning. As it is, however, the partial blockade has reduced her to a condition which should afford us hopes of victory and indicate to us the means of achieving it.

I deem it of prime importance that more and more of Germany's ablest men are seeing with increasing clearness the menace of the economic weapon. They understand it, for it has been one of their favourites in time of peace. In their trade-relations with other nations, the Germans practised a policy which they called *Gegenseitigkeit und Vergeltung*, which means reciprocity and retaliation. Other nations practised “reciprocity,” but only Germany, with its unique combination of science and primitive ideas about intimidation added “retaliation.” The method was painfully simple. The country to which Germany made advances of reciprocity was not free to accept them or decline them. If it did not accept them, it would be punished.

We find an example of this when Canada adopted the principle of the maximum and minimum tariff in which Great Britain became entitled to the benefits of

the lower tariff. Germany, however, demanded equal benefits on the ground of the most favoured nation treaties. Canada refused to recognise this demand, whereupon Germany retaliated by punishing Canadian products through an increase of duties upon them. But the Canadians are an ultra-independent folk and among the least likely on the globe to be cowed by German methods. They therefore replied by erecting an almost prohibitive barrier against the products of Germany. This caused trade between the two countries to diminish nearly to zero, while Canadian-British and Canadian-American trade developed rapidly. A stiff upper lip and a sufficiency of force will always quell a bully in the long run. So when Germany realised that her retaliation policy had driven her wares out of Canadian markets without noticeably affecting Canada, she sued humbly to negotiate an exchange of products on a fair basis.

We see from this that a pitchfork is a perfectly good weapon to use on a bull, and the uttered fears of German commercial leaders reveal that we have a first-class pitchfork in the economic weapon. The enemies of Germany leagued together control so great a part of the world's raw products and so dominate the trade routes by sea and land, harbours and coaling stations, that they can, *if they will act together*, so apply the economic weapon that Germany simply cannot win.

This weapon, of course, must not be used singly but in conjunction with our other weapons. Some men have one panacea; others, another for winning the war. Those whose thoughts have never outgrown military headgear, are prone to speak only of armies, with some of these inclining to one branch, such as the airplane.

180 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Other critics put all their hope in blockade, others in propaganda and still others in the magic cure-all of a "gathering around the table." A few who still fail to understand the peculiar little ways of Prussian temperament, or are addicted to something worse, are convinced that peace might be best brought about if we would expose the other cheek to the fist of mail.

The point is, all weapons are necessary. Take the purely military ones, for example. Assuming that the armies of either side collapsed, our other weapons would be valueless. Therefore, even though neither army could win in itself, it must be strong enough to prevent the other army doing so. For more than four years of war, that is precisely what has been happening. An army might be weakened from the rear, however, to such an extent that it would ultimately succumb. That is one aim of the German submarine warfare. It is also one aim of our blockade. It is, therefore, conceivable that these so-called secondary weapons might in the long-run prove the primary ones.

Blockade not only affects armies, but it affects whole nations behind them,—first, materially and from this temperamentally. This is a war of exhaustion, and in such a war these effects of blockade are of first importance.

The one thing that buoys up each side is hope. Deprive either of it and the other wins. Hope is the greatest boon to the human race. It has saved lives and made republics and empires. When we convince the German people that further sacrifices and deprivations are useless, we shall be within sight of peace; and conversely, until we do convince them, they will continue to be the willing instruments of their leaders.

Only during one period of the war thus far has hope almost faded from them. That was in the summer and autumn of 1916 when food shortage, the breakdown at Verdun, and the combined attacks east and west so shook Germany that her much-vaunted unity was threatened. Pessimism was contagious. Everybody grumbled. Nobody smiled publicly. As I passed among them I felt like a man standing on a dripping landscape with all horizons leaden-hued. At last the German Government was up against it with its own people. It played its Hindenburg card, and was successful more through Allied weakness than German strength—tremendous as that is. The clouds lifted over Roumania and Russia, and the sustaining sunshine of hope burst forth upon the Central Powers.

Once more the leaders sought to imbue the people with the spirit to hold out and endure anything rather than yield. After studying the war on both sides, from the beginning I am convinced that the *will-to-win* will be the final determinant. It has been developed in the Germans to a high degree through a combination of patriotism, delusion, and the horror of the taxation burdens consequent upon defeat.

We can win only if we develop it to an equal and even greater extent. We can crack the German people's *will* to win if we but smash their *hope* to win. When that happens, the people may demand something definite in the way of peace terms from their leaders. This can only be accomplished through a combination of all the forces we possess.

One of these continues to be blockade. Frankly, my observations have made me feel that without blockade, the Allied armies can not win. With it properly ap-

182 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

plied, they can not lose. The supplies drawn by the enemy from Roumania are confessedly for us a drawback, but only a drawback. Even neglecting them, however, we are certain in time to exhaust Germany now that we have her cut off from the seas in the West *if we can prevent her utilising Russia for supplies.* Not only "after the war," but winning *this war* depends largely upon our success in Russia in the blockade sense. If we do not find it feasible to send armies, we can at least send "educators,"—not the kind that go about in silk hats and frock coats—to convince spirits grown restive under German domination of the desirability of interfering with lines of communication and otherwise obstructing the movement of products westward.

The economic weapon as a bargaining implement is blockade carried to the peace conference. Right here bobs up a difficulty. In using any weapon of war, the Allies have been thus far not so firmly cemented together as our enemies. The latter know this perfectly well and will seek in the future, even more than they have done in the past, to take advantage of it.

They fear the economic weapon and are getting ready to meet it. Well-informed Germans see themselves up against two problems:

1. To get raw materials after the war.
2. To provide the ships to bring them home.

Until late in 1916 the Germans were extremely optimistic on the after-war shipping problem. In their minds they would obtain an immediate advantage at the close of a war during which they slaughtered enemy and neutral shipping while they continued their own building. Two things, however, have interfered with

this delightful programme for getting the jump on the rest of the world. First, Hindenburg's comb-out, plus increased U-boat construction, greatly reduced building for after the war; second, the entrance of the United States and Brazil.

Before the war, Germany's mercantile marine comprised 5,200,000 gross tonnage. Of this more than 2,000,000 tons have been sunk or are in the hands of her enemies, while upwards of 1,000,000 tons are locked up in the ports of her allies or those of neutrals, mostly in the latter.

My observations at German shipping centres lead me to place the total of her merchant shipping completed since the outbreak of war at 380,000 tons. Adding this to that in her own ports and those of her allies, plus that taken in the Black sea, she has only half of her pre-war amount ready at hand. Paraphrasing a one-time popular song, this can be "all steamed up and have no place to go." We should keep this little paraphrase in mind, for it is one of the high trumps among our weapons, and we should play it with the rest.

As I have previously remarked, however, the German leaders are a determined set of men. Realising the plight of their shipping and modern Germany's dependence upon it, they have formulated scheme after scheme to put it on its feet again. Their latest plan is for the Government to make direct grants to the ship owners which will enable them to replace what they have lost. In return for these direct subsidies, which will never be repaid, the Government reserves a claim to any indemnification which might be obtained from foreign countries and to regulate the uses to which ships shall be put. Subsidised ships may not be sold

184 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

to aliens during a period of ten years after they are put in commission, nor may any chartering or freight contracts affecting such ships be concluded with aliens for ten years without government permit. In order to speed up construction, the subsidies will be on a sliding scale. They may amount to from 60 to 80 per cent of the peace value if the ship is put in commission three years after the conclusion of peace, with a decline to 20 per cent in the tenth year.

Even more than shipping, however, the raw materials question is bothering the Germans. In order to present a solid front at the peace negotiations in this matter, they began systematically soon after the beginning of their great spring offensive of 1918 to bring together in liability companies the whole industrial, commercial, financial, and shipping forces of the Empire.

At this point it is useful to go back a little to those years preceding the war when Germany was filled with discussion on colonial expansion. At that time, Paul Rohrbach, one of her leading economists and a brilliantly clear thinker, said in connection with peaceful penetration:

"Our land and climate, under conditions that will continue as far as one can foresee, allow the production of cereals for some 40,000,000 people. Hence, in a few years, it will be necessary to buy bread from abroad, not to the extent of one-sixth or one-fifth as now, but of nearly one-half.

"Whoever buys from abroad must give back in return either money or goods. But we do not possess a single commodity which we can produce in such quantities that it can be an equivalent for this foreign bread. We have neither precious metals in great abundance nor valuable

plants, nor coal, iron, and ores in superfluity. Furthermore, we have hardly any of the raw materials necessary for our industry in adequate quantities at home. We import iron, copper, wool and flax; we do not possess a single fibre of cotton or silk, not to speak of less needful stuffs.

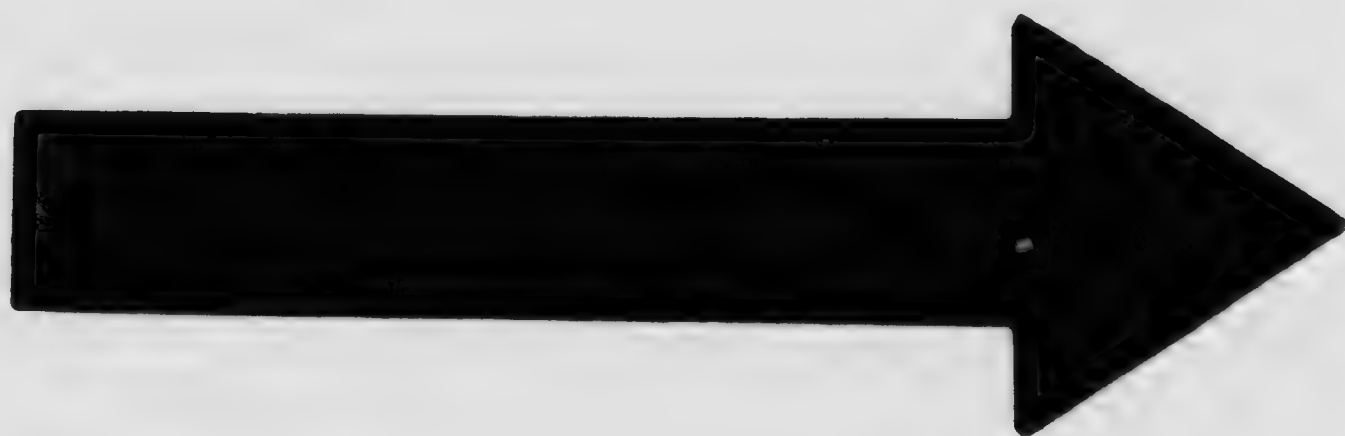
"The only way of purchasing food from abroad for our surplus population is by importing raw materials, multiplying their value by the process of manufacture, and then paying other nations who need our product with this increased value which our labour has given to the original material.

"We must resign ourselves to the fact that there is no possibility of acquiring colonies suitable for emigration.* But if we can not have such colonies, it by no means follows that we can not obtain the advantages which make these colonies desirable. It is a mistake to regard the mere possession of trans-oceanic territories, even when they are able to absorb the national surplus of population, as necessarily a direct increase of power. Australia, Canada, and South Africa do not increase the power of the Mother Country because they are British possessions, nor even because a few million British live in them, but because by the trade with them, the wealth and with it the defensive strength of the Mother Country is increased.

"Colonies which do not produce such a result have but little value; and countries which possess this importance for a nation, even though they are not its

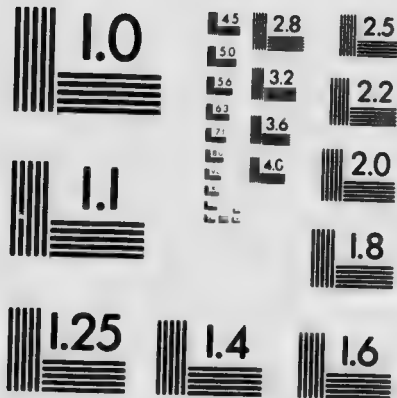
* This was written, of course, before the war. When I asked the pan-German Reichstag member, Herr Stresemann, shortly before the break with America, whether Germany expected her colonies back again, he replied:

"We expect colonies, but not the same ones. There will undoubtedly be a juggling about of the world map. For emigration we shall demand the Baltic provinces of Russia, Algeria and part of Morocco from France, and possibly Tripoli from Italy."



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

186 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

colonies, are in this decisive point a substitute for colonial possessions in the ordinary sense."

In November, 1917, Professor Förster of Munich, replying to the annexationist demands of Admiral von Tirpitz, sounds almost the same key that Rohrbach sounded years ago. Professor Förster said: "Assuming even that we conquered all Italy and all Russia, and in addition to Belgium held the whole of the north of France as an economic indemnity and as a base against England, how would all that help us to rebuild our world industry, which is entirely dependent upon the gigantic markets of Pan-America and of the British World-Empire?"

"It is by being carried upon the back of the British World-Empire that we have acquired our greatest riches; only by the help of our gigantic export could we pay for our indispensable raw materials—for example, for the wool which we imported from England to the value of about \$87,500,000 a year.

"The fundamental miscalculation of our might school of politicians is that they do not appreciate the simple truth that there are two parties to all exportation, and that no explosives in the world can enable us to compel a man or a woman in Manchester, Montreal, Chicago, Cairo, or Buenos Aires, to buy a single pair of stockings from Chemnitz. If people's hearts are closed to us, their warehouses are closed to us also."

Professor Förster explains that he is not discussing the dangers of an official boycott. His argument is that the boycott of public opinion is infinitely worse. Some of his countrymen, however, do fear the official boycott, among them Herr Eduard Dettmann, a retired

consul. When presenting his views to his Government in March, 1918, he declared emphatically:

"For our salvation we can not too clearly realise that the danger of a raw material boycott is extremely serious."

He then reviewed the whole field of German trade, and, after expressing pessimistic views about German dependence upon her enemies for cotton, wool and copper added that she was equally dependent upon British India for jute, upon India and Brazil for rubber, upon the Argentine for hides, upon Bolivia for tin, and for other enemy and near-enemy sources for palm oils, cocoa and manganese ores. On the other hand, developments in the East had diminished German anxiety about petroleum, and Germany was also less dependent upon Chili for nitrates owing to the development of her new nitrogen industry. She might also get a sufficiency of manganese to harden her steel from Russia.

After stating that Germany's stoppage of her export of dyes and drugs had only resulted in the stimulation of foreign competition in these lines for the future, and that the only available German economic weapon would be a veto upon the export of potash, he concluded, with a significance that we should not fail to grasp:

"We need the open door; otherwise our industry will perish. Consequently it is absolutely necessary to push the raw materials question into the peace negotiations and to make it one of the most important questions. The peace must be such as to bind the Entente Governments to exercise no influence, direct or indirect, to the injury of our raw materials requirements."

Herr Dettmann suggested that Germany should play the Allies against one another. America for example

should be told that she can not have potash, unless she agrees to let Germany have a sufficient supply of cotton and rubber. Then, "when America is ready to negotiate," her influence must be exerted upon England to obtain Australian wool for Germany. In like manner, Australia's interest in maintaining her German market for wool, must be exploited and Germany must refuse—even at the cost of self-denial—to import Brazilian coffee before Brazil supplies the necessary rubber.

We see then the economic dangers which Germany fears and how she may try to circumvent them. We possess the tremendous advantage over our enemies of the economic weapon, and it would be criminal negligence toward the men who are risking their lives in our cause if we fail to apply it to the utmost. Spasmodic attempts by individual nations to use this weapon later would be of little use. That would mean the undesirable kind of "war-after-the-war." Such desultory tactics, moreover, would be ineffective inasmuch as the old trade rivalry would spring up between individuals and between nations; and Germany, if her present system continued, could subtly play one against the other.

We shall not need any "war-after-the-war" if we quickly develop during the war a unity of economic action just as we have developed unity of military action. If we do this, the fact that some twenty-three nations are opposed to Germany, will have proper significance. In this there is almost unlimited scope for the highest talents of statesmanship the Allies possess. If we can weld together the countries fighting Germany into an indissoluble unit to stand right through the war and right up through the last hour of the peace conference, in refusing Germany all the raw products

they control and permission to sail her ships, she will be up against a barrier she cannot pass. But there is no use in one nation or two nations merely talking about this. We have got to make a definite, concrete agreement that will impress every German.

But this is a war of "If's," in the sense that every move depends upon certain other moves. The economic threat, for example, would not wholly succeed unless we solve the U-boat menace to the extent that we are certain to create more new tonnage than is destroyed.

Once asked Sir Thomas Lipton, who is a self-made man, what he considered to be the keynote of achievement.

"First make up your mind," said Sir Thomas, "whether you really want what you think you want. If you decide that you do, and it is worth while, concentrate all your energies upon it and do your damndest until you get it."

Sir Thomas is right. As with individuals, so with nations. The first essential for victory over Germany is for us to make up our minds that playing the game fair, we are going to go the limit to achieve it. Having done this, we must look to all the weapons which we possess and can develop, and make full use of every one of them. In this most complex of struggles, these weapons, depending the one upon the other, are:

1. To increase our armies from the successful defensive stage to the successful offensive stage. This means increase of material as well as troop numbers. After thorough preparation there is no reason why aircraft and navies should not render smashing service in co-operation with land attacks.

2. Tighten the blockade to the utmost. In this

190 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Russia is the weak link. It can conceivably prove the fatal link for us. We must use every ingenuity to prevent Russian supplies going to Germany. With the economic line of our enemies running along the edge of a precipice year after year, anything moving it either way may be decisive. But we must recognize essential facts and meet them. The Bolshevik Government is an enemy and must be treated as such. The increasing troubles of that régime are causing Germany great anxiety. As Paul Rohrbach says in *Deutsche Politik*, Germany's best economic organ:

"For the present there is no greater interest in the East than maintaining Bolshevism. The Bolsheviks are ruining Great Russia and we ought to do everything in order that they may continue activities which are so profitable for us. The Bolsheviks themselves believe that they are the salvation, not only of Russia, but of the world. That is the very best creed that we can want—provided that it remains confined to Great Russia. Great Russia for the Bolsheviks and the Bolsheviks for us! Let us preserve the situation and we shall earn the gratitude of the Bolsheviks and the profits for Germany."

The Allies must get rid of the Bolsheviks and seal up Russia against Germany. Then the chain around her will choke her into submission.

3. *Propaganda.* We must conduct this in the first place to prevent Germany weakening our will to win, and, secondly, to enlighten into disorganisation all possible discordant elements among our enemies.

4. Building up the economic weapon to a degree which will enable us to bring its full application to bear upon Germany to enforce our just demands. It is the

decisive weapon in the sense that it can ram home to the German people the necessary truth that the only way in which they can get out into the world of business again is to acknowledge their wrong and treat with the Allies in a spirit of fairness and not a spirit of Deutschland über alles.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INVISIBLE ARMY

So you tried to escape last night, did you?"

"No, sir, I didn't!"

The Prussian captain, his arms folded across his chest, his whole manner domineering, his mouth distorted into a sneer, looked contemptuously at the British prisoner whom he had singled out.

"There is no use denying it," he sneered. "I know all about it."

"But I insist, sir, that I did not try to escape."

"That will do for you in the way of denials. You got frightened and backed out because we nipped your plan which we knew all about. How did we know all about it, you may wonder? Well, I'll tell you—your French comrades gave you away. I suppose they grew faint-hearted and decided to seek favour with us by divulging everything."

"But I insist, sir," said the Englishman, "that there must be a mistake."

"No more excuses," thundered the captain. Then he turned to the guard, drawn up with bayoneted rifles. "Take him to the guard-house," he commanded. "He will be shown that we Germans stand no nonsense."

Thus a British Tommy, far from home and in the hands of the enemy, turned away bewildered—his only plausible explanation to himself being that some of

the French in the camp had lied in order to curry favour with the Germans. Naturally, under the hardships of solitary confinement, this thought would breed a resentment against everything French.

But the morning work of the Prussian captain, a skilled linguist, had only begun. His next duty was to single out a French prisoner. "Hm! you poor misguided fool!" he began. "So you have tried to escape!"

The Frenchman naturally looked amazed. "But no, my Captain. There must be a mistake. I have not tried to escape."

"In a way I'm sorry for you and for the rest of your countrymen. But you would play the part of the fool. You would be pushed into the war by England to play her game, to suffer and bleed for her. She only wanted to use you. And now, after you're in, the English show the falseness which has always been a national trait with them. That's why we know of your attempt to escape. We discovered your English companion in the act; when we questioned him, he broke down and gave the whole thing away. He showed how it was you who originated the whole plan. I am sorry for you, but in Prussia, justice is justice, and you have got to take your punishment. Lead him away!"

And the little *poilu*, who had perhaps never spoken with an Englishman in his life, his mind perplexed, could tug his heart strings against England. Some day he would return to his beloved France where he could tell any friends that the war had left, and his wife and his children, of the treachery of an ally. Likewise, back to England, might a British soldier carry

194 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

and transmit the poison that had stabbed his heart in a Prussian prison camp.

I learned of the incident narrated above from a German soldier eye-witness who had had the misfortune not to have become naturalised during his eight year residence in America. He happened to be visiting relatives in the Fatherland when he was enmeshed in the dragnet. His one hope is to return some day to the United States, where he intends to make his home and turn his back on Kaiserism forever.

I found plenty of evidence in Germany that this method of sowing dissension among prisoners was widely repeated, with variations. No detail in the plan for world-domination is considered too trifling to be ignored. No act is too low for the German leaders, if they believe it will help them to secure this domination.

Germany utilised her great prisoners' camps to build up the propaganda artillery with which she battered Russia, the notorious General Friedrich being given command of this highly important campaign work. His first step was to single out 50,000 Ukrainian prisoners for special treatment. These were told that they would have an easier lot than the Poles and other fellow-prisoners. Most of them could not even read and write their own tongue; but in Germany they were taught not only to read and write Russian, but also, to some extent, German. Like the schoolboy brought up on German text-books in America, they could read about the good things in Germany and of what a kindly and wonderful man is William the Second and all his ancestors.

This was done so that, as General Friedrich him-

self said, "they might go back to their own country to spread the truth about Germany." But German instruction is a rigorous thing, and therefore General Friedrich thought it best to send it on its mission thoroughly armed. So the selected prisoners went home with plenty of guns and ammunition.

But the thorough General went even further and started to organise an army. Even the semi-official Wolff telegraph bureau unwittingly added proof to this on February 22, 1918, when it said:

"The foundations of the Ukrainian national army are being laid in the Kovel district. The first Ukraine division, whose officers are Staff officers and whose men are former prisoners of war, is already in training. Officers and men, wearing the old historic uniform of the Ukrainian Cossacks—long blue coats and white-grey caps—make the best possible impression. The morale and appearance of these soldiers, *who come straight out of the German prisoners' camps*, are the best tribute to the treatment of prisoners of war in Germany."

How many people throughout the world would be duped by such a paragraph as this? The history of the past shows us that a great many would be. They would feel that, after all, here is evidence of good conditions among prisoners in Germany. How many people would see that it was merely another injection of German poison? Comparatively few, but happily the number is growing rapidly.

Though the official Wolff telegraph bureau keeps the well-read German population thoroughly "informed" about each day's events, it does not reach the greater part of the undeveloped Turkish Empire. The German leaders, however, did not let such an obstacle stand in

196 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

the way of enlightening the remote masses of their Turkish allies.

When the British withdrew from Gallipoli, the German military managers of Turkey organised bands of runners to spread the joyous tidings to the utmost recesses of Asia Minor. The runners worked in relays, after the manner of the bearers of the Fiery Cross in Scott's "Lady of the Lake." After Townsend's surrender at Kut, the runners were again dispatched; for it is part of German policy to kill British prestige throughout Asia. Happily, since the fall of Kut, these Turkish marathoners have had plenty of opportunity to enjoy a well-earned rest.

Regarding German influence in Asia, Count Reventlow says: "An anarchistic India would be far more advantageous to German interests than an India which remains under British supremacy. A liberated India would be best for Germany and for India, too. But until that kind of an India can be established, the next best thing is the creation and maintenance of chronic unrest and disorder."

In the stirring events of the war obscure happenings in Belgium attract but little attention. The Germans, however, are working minutely upon a plan to disrupt that already mutilated land so that, in case they can not hold it, they can at least play its disruption to their advantage at the Peace Conference. Belgium and Switzerland have been two extraordinary little nations in the sense that they are made up of races which in the great countries about them have been hostile to one another, but in these small countries have lived together amicably and have developed truly national aspirations.

In Belgium the Walloons are racially akin to the French and the Flemings to the Germans; and Germany, with her highly-developed hypocrisy, is seeking to make use of this fact by encouraging "independence" among the Flemings. Once more the German weapon of "learning" has been brought into play, and an exchange-professor system inaugurated. Later the "Council of Flanders" was organised, made up of over two hundred so-called "trustworthy delegates." This Council was ceremoniously received by von Bethmann-Hollweg, then Imperial Chancellor, who promised, "We shall promote the Flemish movement in every possible way at the moment of negotiations for peace and afterwards."

In March, 1917, the German Government divided Belgium into two parts for administrative purposes, making Brussels the headquarters of Flanders which includes the provinces of East Flanders, West Flanders, Limbourg and Antwerp, with the districts of Brussels and Louvain; and making Namur the headquarters of the provinces of Luxembourg, Liège, Hainault, and Nivelles. In general the people of the first part are less harshly treated than those of the second.

The rank and file of the German troops are being used to widen the breach between the two Belgians. In order to impress the natives, the soldiers are forbidden to speak French, unless absolutely necessary, and encouraged to learn and speak Flemish. Imagine any other nation going into such details! Keep these things in mind, however, when your neighbour tells you what a wonderful people the Germans must be in order to stand up against the world.

Early in 1918 Germany completed the arrange-

198 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

ments which she hopes will permit her to go to the Peace Conference with a trump Belgian card up her sleeve, namely, that Flanders has legally declared itself independent under the protection of the German Empire.

The Germans believe in doing things "legally," which makes it all the more necessary that they be closely watched in every move that they make. Therefore they staged the show with a first-act reception to a picked delegation from the picked "Council of Flanders," which was received with pomp at Brussels on January 15, 1918, by Herr Walheraff, the German Imperial Secretary of State for the Interior, who was former Burgomaster of Cologne. A love feast followed, a sumptuous banquet at which food tickets were not needed, and on January 20, 1918, Germany could proclaim that the "Council of Flanders" had "solemnly and unanimously resolved upon the complete independence of Flanders."

One might suppose that the absence of the most important leaders of Belgian life from a body of delegates elected at "packed" polling, which was participated in by only a small minority of the population under the auspices of spiked helmets and bayonets, might prove a disconcerting omission. But apparently it does not greatly disturb the German leaders who intend to bring to the Peace Conference their basic policy of *divide and destroy*.

The war-time measures described thus far in this chapter are but superstructure reared upon a foundation built by the Germans in peace to enable them to control other countries by quiet penetration. Their system of government, with its central control in the

linking up of politics with banking, trade, and publicity, enabled them to erect this foundation, whose broad features, as applied to all countries, were these:

1. Central organising in Berlin.
2. Ascertaining to what extent the average business man in other countries was ignorant of international politics, with the consequent playing to the limit such ignorance.
3. Setting apart a fund to enable German chemists and engineers to work abroad so cheaply that they could crowd other labour out of the market and thus learn the secrets of foreign competitors.
4. By home methods of greater manufacturing efficiency, longer hours and lower wages, and superior and higher organisation and preferential transportation rates, the German manufacturer,—having obtained the other man's secrets,—could frequently drive him to the wall.
5. Investing German capital with native capital abroad and withdrawing it to put it in something else, after the undertaking had proved successful. The management would usually remain in German hands, however.
6. Slipping on the cloak of naturalisation.
7. The trade wedge successfully driven, the central organisation in Berlin, i.e., the German Government, would then enter politics and buy up as much as possible of parliaments and the press. The Germans found ways to buy men, to be sure, so that many of the purchased never even suspected that they had been for sale.

There were two countries in Europe which became especially saturated with Germanism before the war.

200 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

One of these was Russia; the other, Italy. With regard to the latter, the fortune of international diplomacy played into the German hands.

In 1893 the Italian heir to the throne happened to attend the German manœuvres at Metz, an act which caused such resentment in France that she liquidated a billion francs in Italian securities. This created a panic in Italy. That gave Germany her golden opportunity, which she was quick to seize. Within two years Berlin bankers had founded what was destined quickly to become Italy's most powerful bank, the Banco Commerciale, with headquarters at Milan and branches throughout Italy and the world.

The Banco Commerciale was started in 1895 with a capital of only \$1,000,000, but before the war it had increased to \$31,000,000. It is significant that though only \$750,000 of the capital stock remained in German hands, the whole policy of the Bank was directed from Berlin and its power used in the interests of Pan-Germanism.

The Bank once established, Germany was ready to rear her influence upon the foundation whose seven general features have been described above. The Bank used its colossal power to push the sales of German products with the double object of excluding from the Italian market goods coming from other countries and of preventing any great expansion of Italian industries. If an Italian firm, in need of new machinery, or other material, should venture after these in open market, a persuasive "recommendation" from the Bank would almost invariably be received, urging it to select a German product bought from a German firm or a firm with German connections. Otherwise the

Italian firm would find its credit cut off, and would be driven to ruin.

Through the Bank Berlin tightened its strangle hold on the Italian press. Each corporation controlled by the Bank was induced to subscribe to a stipulated amount of stock in a designated newspaper or periodical—which subscription would, of course, influence the editorial side of the paper. The newspapers, furthermore, received regular subsidies, generally in the form of advertising contracts and advertisements of the industries of their region. (This method is similar to that increasingly employed by the Krupps in Germany, Chapter V.)

The wires were now laid to sway Italian ideas through the bank which Berlin controlled in Italy and which in turn dominated the industrial life of the country.

From the press to politics became the next logical step, and thence from politics to things military. Even the electric power plants were controlled by Germans, which made it necessary for their engineers to be admitted everywhere even to the most closely-guarded fortifications. In the province of Venetia, along the Austrian frontier, over 97 per cent of the electric power was in Teuton hands.

All this peaceful penetration was so unobtrusive and insidious that most Italians never realised its existence. Indeed, the upper classes, both in politics and in commerce, were educated to admire Germany and the Germans.

Thus was the ground harrowed for the German seed of propaganda during the war. Politicians in Rome continued to play the petty politics of party intrigue,

202 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

not because in most cases they wished deliberately to wreck their country, but because like petty politicians the world over, as distinguished from constructive statesmen, they had devoted their lives to clique machinations to such an extent that they had no time thoroughly to grasp great national and international issues.

Disaffection at Rome spread to the war zone, and part of the army became affected for reasons which may be grouped under the following heads:

1. The Italian statesmen had not stated clearly to the people their reasons for their participation in the war.

2. The troops grew stale because they were not moved from place to place to the extent of some other armies.

3. Leave was too infrequent.

4. Rations had been reduced.

Germany scientifically tapped the Italian line to find the chief points of dissatisfaction. She found an important one on the Isonzo near Monte Nero, which happened to be highly strategic, whereupon she set to work in her painstaking way. German and Austrian officers and a few Bulgarian officers who had been educated in Italy, were enabled, after fraternisation had set in, to pay nightly visits to the Italian trenches where they talked of the hardships of war and the charms of peace. "Would it not be well," they suggested, "to end all these hardships?" "It would only be necessary for both sides to go home. Then peace would come automatically. If our officers try to stop us, we can shoot them."

These whisperings progressed so favourably that the

visiting officers set October 24, 1917, as the day for the general home-going. Dawn broke with the Italians in peaceful mood, but the Germans had massed six of their crack divisions opposite Monte Nero, with the result that a wedge was driven into the Italian positions. The reserves behind Monte Nero, based upon the town of Caporetto—which gives the disaster its name—were ordered to fill the gap, but they refused to fight.

Then the heart-rending realisation of troops to the right and the left of the break, that the heights which they had stormed and upon which so many of their comrades had poured out their blood must be abandoned without firing a gun; the toil of months and years in blazing sun and bitter cold, miles of galleries blasted through solid rock, gun positions on almost inaccessible peaks, newly constructed roads, supplies—all wiped out because a few troops somewhere in the line had trusted in German talk and had left a fatal gap.

On a few winding roads it was impossible to bring back rapidly great armies which had gone up slowly, whole units were isolated on lofty mountains and more units hopelessly choked in narrow valleys, with no near line upon which to fall. It was inevitable that the loss of men and material should be enormous. Though some troops broke, the majority struggled every step of the way to save a complete collapse. Of particular merit was the accomplishment of an Italian artillery commander, who, with tenacity and skill, brought his forty-three batteries down two thousand feet to the Isonzo, then up two thousand feet on the other side, then forty nerve-racking miles across country, with the enemy

204 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

always on his heels, until he reached the swollen, tempestuous Tagliamento River near Codroipo. Once across the river, his guns would be reasonably safe, but as he reached it, a dull boom shook the bank and a cloud of flying debris rose and splashed back into the stream. Some one had blundered. The bridge mine had been fired too soon.

On the line of the Piave, I witnessed what was probably one of the most rapid transformations of history. In three weeks the Italians had lost a third of their active forces; yet the remainder, apparently disorganised, turned at bay and stubbornly contested every inch of the ground. On the plateau, between the Brenta and Piave, they were like a football team inside its own five-yard line,—and they held. The last half of November and December passed with the enemy unable to make further gains. So, guns failing, he switched once more to the smile that lures to ruin.

On Christmas morning, just before dawn, I went through the communicating trenches to the front line near Zenson. The light had only broken when the enemy began the day in a most cordial manner. He had almost wrecked Italy two months before by an excessive cordiality, and apparently he is no believer in Abraham Lincoln's philosophy on "fooling all of the people all of the time." So he hoisted a large placard on which was printed:

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

LET US BE BROTHERS!

Recent history was sufficiently painful in the minds of the Italians, however, to prevent them reciprocating

in kind. On the other hand, they did no firing, and the day settled down to a stillness suggesting that of a New England village on the Sabbath. Apparently Christmas is Christmas, and both sides seemed to enjoy a day off from being killed.

The Austrians, however, were fairly bubbling with friendliness—according to plan. Persistent, they openly suggested fraternisation and even went to the extent of announcing by placard that the Russians had thrown off the chains of their rulers and had gone home happy. The moral which the Italians were expected to draw is, of course, obvious.

About half-past three, two Italian officers came into the trench and expressed their opinion that the Austrians would, under no circumstances, start fighting, inasmuch as they clearly intended to use Christmas as the ideal day to start another "friendliness" offensive. To support this opinion, one of them stood on the firing step and put his head over the parapet for a look at the river scenery just below us. "We would not do this yesterday," the first explained, "nor would we do it to-morrow. But to-day is perfectly safe."

I did not share their baby blue-eyed faith, but of course it was up to me to join them. We were within easy range, as the river here was only about a hundred yards wide. But the enemy would not even snipe that day. So we stepped back safely into the trench, which had taken on a somewhat careless attitude.

At half-past four the curtain was rung up on an entirely different act, without even a placard to announce the change of bill. The opposite bank shook with electrifying suddenness; trench mortars and all calibres up to the nine-inch belched all along the line.

206 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Some of us escaped into dugouts, while the trenches above were torn and shattered on every side. The Italians who but a few minutes before had been lulled into dreams of home under the belief that Christmas would pass peacefully, were tricked once more and went down to death to mingle in many cases their shredded flesh with the blood-soaked muck below the duck-boards.

Once again I had been brought face to face with the hard cold fact that to accept the hand held out by the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs is not chivalry but suicide.

While in Germany I poignantly realised that the poison which was sapping Italy and Russia, was being injected a hundred-fold into the life-blood of the United States . . . a realisation which kept me awake many an hour at night. I was well aware that the overwhelming majority of my countrymen had never interested themselves in European affairs, were remote from the conflict, and were ever ready to welcome the stranger and believe in him.

Most people's lives are pretty much occupied with the routine of making a living, so that the farmer or manufacturer, storekeeper or office assistant, busy with his daily tasks in Turner's Falls, Omaha or New York, must inevitably form most of his opinions from what he reads. Consequently, if the German Government handles visiting press representatives in a way to put them in a mood to see what is shown and to let alone what is out of sight, it can, through them, influence Turner's Falls, Omaha and New York. In short, if it could keep us chloroformed while it was winning in

Europe, it could then comfortably turn its attention to the western hemisphere.

It was common knowledge in some circles in Berlin that the correspondent of a leading American newspaper used to express the ardent hope that he might earn a German war decoration. Another war correspondent admitted that he hoped to settle down in Berlin after the war, and that if his war-reporting was satisfactory to the Wilhelmstrasse, he would probably be on the inside for big scoops later in peace. That was all very well for these men personally. But was the plain American citizen back in Turner's Falls, Omaha and New York getting a square deal?

After I had become thoroughly convinced of the Imperial Government's moral dereliction in the world of to-day, and of her menace to the future of my own country, I resolved to act and told Ambassador Gerard of my resolution. That is why, after I had managed to get out of Germany, I deliberately wrote an article in the *London Times*, for wide syndication in American newspapers, in which I gave details of how American correspondents were shackled in Berlin. I expected the article to create a sensation. It certainly did. I showed it to an American journalistic friend in London before it went to press. "It's hot stuff," he admitted, "and very much needed. But I wouldn't sign my name to it for \$50,000. You will find yourself heavily attacked by the men you mention—men who will be backed by gigantic influence."

The highly-organised attack which soon developed, was directed from Berlin by William Bayard Hale, German-America's super-Ambassador to the German court, and apologist-in-chief for the Fatherland in the

208 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

United States. Incidentally, Hale is the man who wrote Dernberg's justification of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, as revealed in Federal investigations of the Kaiser's purchase of the New York *Evening Mail*. Working with him on the one hand, were the "spoon-fed" among the correspondents; on the other, the Imperial Government with all its wireless and all its resources; while co-operating with all these were the three American newspaper men in London who represented the same papers represented in Berlin by the men to whom I had devoted special attention. The customary method of attempting to discredit the accuser was widely resorted to—the same method now being employed in Germany against Prince Lichnowsky and Herr Mühlön. The idea of having some of the cabled fiction pertaining to me bear the London label at the top of the column was rather clever. My peculiar advantage in the fight, however, is that I dealt only in facts—and time is the ally of facts.

I regret to introduce matters so personal to myself, but I do so because they are illuminative of fundamentals. The war will be won or lost through the ideas of the peoples and not by mere commands of sovereigns. Actions spring from ideas. That is why publicity that shapes opinion is so powerful that within the next few years it can fashion the future of mankind.

There is a multitude of recent evidence to show that it is German intention not to diminish propaganda but to increase it. A combination of some hundreds of the most important Hamburg firms presented a programme to the Imperial Chancellor in June, 1918, which shows the part to be played by the influencing of public opinion abroad in their effort to recoup their fallen for-

tunes. After proposing a more intensive organisation of the diplomatic and consular service the programme continues:

"A reformation of our foreign service is useless unless there is also a change of our foreign policy. It must correspond with Germany's position as a world-power, and above all things it must assume and guarantee the protection of Germans abroad and their rights. The proper consideration must be given to the influencing of public opinion abroad.

"The diplomatist must above all cultivate good relations with the Press of the country in which he resides. The Empire must grant him adequate credits for fulfilling his tasks.

"It is the business of the News Department to conduct the propaganda service in foreign countries in German economic and political interests. Its main task is to be in touch with the Press at home and abroad. For foreign countries official and special organisations must be created for this purpose, and will work in the service of a German official telegraph bureau. This bureau should be based as far as possible upon a German cable system or wireless service. The News Department will be advised about German economic propaganda in foreign countries by a committee of prominent German traders abroad."

Happily there are high barriers in the way of German control of American public opinion through the Press. In the first place, the vast majority of American newspaper owners and editors can not be bought by all the money that the Kaiser can scrape together; and secondly, the war has revealed German methods enough to put us on our guard in the future.

210 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

I confess that I have been surprised upon coming home to find the tide rising so high against Germanism. When I was in St. Paul, for example, I learned that School Commissioner Albert Wunderlich announced his intention "to weed out of the school system every pro-German sympathiser among the teaching force." Indeed the commissioner, whose name would suggest at least partial German origin, began immediately to carry out his commendable policy. He also announced that no German would be taught at the St. Paul public schools next year, and this is a section of our country which I used to be told in Germany was safe!

The question of the elimination of German from our schools is a debatable one. Properly supervised, the teaching of it as a foreign language ought not to be a danger. To do away with the language and the original study of Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Heine, Gerstäcker and Storm, seemed to me at first like swinging the pendulum too far. But we are at war, and we are only beginning to have brought home to us the awfulness of what war means. It is criminal not to take full measures to protect the men who are risking their lives and their health. If we do not truly mean business we have no ethical right to send a single soldier to meet his death.

It is regrettably true that things essentially good may be used to accomplish evil. German music is stimulating, and the group-singing of folk-songs I myself have found exceedingly enjoyable. But when the passions aroused by music are deliberately used to weld Americans of German origin to the machine of foreign mili-

tarism, we must in self defence call a halt. Likewise, the language of good German literature is also the language of William II, Ludendorff and Tirpitz—the spearhead with which they would divide America. Such being the case, it is our duty to tear this spearhead from their hands. A general purging for a few years ought to be beneficial. After we smash Prussianism, we can safely restore the study of German to our curriculum.

On this subject the *Cologne Gazette* contained an illuminating article. Shortly after we declared war it said:

“A constant work of political illumination must be carried on by us in the United States. Every American who is convinced that Germany is conducting a defensive war, is lost to the cause of the Entente.

“In all this work, our best allies will continue to be the German-Americans whose services to the German cause can be underestimated only by crass ignorance of American conditions—ignorance which, indeed, is no rarity in many German circles. *Good Americans as, of course, they are* (reader will kindly note the ambiguity which I have italicised), they have hitherto pursued no separatist policy. Accordingly they do not constitute any self-contained group in the political life of the union. All the greater, however, is consequently their indirect influence because all classes, all professions, all political and other circles are leavened in strongest measure with German-Americans.

“The German-Americans constitute a sounding board for German propaganda such as exists in no other enemy country, and they introduce into American feeling a factor of prudence and reserve which often already has been a matter of despair for Herr Wilson and his Eng-

212 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

lish friends. We can be certain that now also, they will be at their posts."

Looking more to the future, the "League for Germanism in Foreign Countries" says in its 1918 annual report:

"We have regarded it as our duty to collect money for the time after the war, in order then to be in a position to employ adequate resources. After the peace we shall strive everywhere to improve our existing oversea schools, and to give the Germans abroad such a course of education that, as far as possible, they will be superior to all other peoples. Our work must be completed by the despatch of good propaganda literature and a news service. Only by the employment of large resources can thorough work be accomplished; small funds are for the most part uselessly squandered.

"We should like to insist that South America, the main field of our activity for many years past, constitutes a great sphere. Wide areas, with great possibilities of development, but little cultivated hitherto, are waiting to be opened up. It must be our business to employ here all our strength in order to retain and to make useful to ourselves these countries with their markets and raw materials. What we have to do is to arm for the peace and to collect money, in order to be able immediately to act with energy—with our whole strength and with sufficient resources."

An enterprising Hamburg concern, Paustian Brothers, began publishing English and French periodicals in 1918 entitled, respectively, *Little Puck* and *Le Petit Parisien* which are designed to help teach the English and French languages for after-the-war-trade purposes. An advertisement of the papers reads:

"During the war England has for the most part paralysed German export trade. We shall and must recover what we have lost. To that end a knowledge of foreign languages is indispensable. Those who have an elementary knowledge of English or French should therefore not let it grow rusty, but subscribe to our journals. They are edited so as to give the quickest and most practical instruction. Civilians as well as soldiers and sailors at the front should take them. They specialise in trade idioms and everything else of value to our future export industry."

There is, indeed, official sanction for the Germans whose activities in Allied countries have been so rudely interrupted by the war. In May, 1918, the Kaiser himself held out a "message of hope to all foreign Germans driven out of enemy countries." To thousands of these "foreign Germans" he has sent his photograph, accompanied by the following statement:

"A stronger German Empire and a more intelligent German nation will look after our foreign German brothers after this victorious war, when they resume their life in hives of German industry and intellectual pursuits. God bless every German home which remains true to and proud of its German characteristics! God advance every man who does honour to his German name! God protect German mothers who in silence but steadfastness bring up coming generations in the spirit of the German fathers, and God bless each and all of us who remain faithful to the future and greatness of the German national brotherhood! In unity there is strength!"

Probably in connection with the former activities of these "foreign Germans" after the war, the new German

214 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Foreign Museum of Stuttgart is gathering a great archive of information about their experiences. All such Germans and their relatives are being publicly requested to send the Museum every scrap of information of the experiences undergone by the "foreign Germans" both at the outbreak of and during the war. How they succeeded in getting out of the hands of the enemy and getting home, is a point on which the fullest information is desired. "No details should be considered too insignificant," says the appeal.

That all of Berlin's efforts to unite Germans and disrupt us have not been confined to the intellectual side, we have had only too much evidence in the work of Count Bernstorff, Captain von Papen, Captain Boy-Ed, Captain Franz von Rintelen and their hired bands of dynamiters and assassins.

I came upon a peculiar case in June, 1918, when I stopped off at one of our biggest munition centres on my way East from Chicago. After midnight the naval officer, who was my host, began to tell me of some enemy interference with artillery manufacture in a plant some eighteen miles away.

"But that was some time ago, wasn't it?" I asked. "Such business is pretty well checked now, isn't it?"

"It happened only yesterday," he said with warmth. "If you care to stay over to-morrow, I'll show you what they did."

I told him that it was necessary for me to catch the 10:30 train in the morning.

"All right," he said. "If you care to miss your sleep, I'll take you to the plant early and let you see for yourself."

I never believe in letting sleep interfere with such

opportunities, so I was on hand with him in the morning in a mammoth building, filled with great guns, slowly revolving on the lathes which bored their barrels.

My friend took me aside and showed me a stack of metal discs. "These must fit the gun breaches perfectly," he said, "for they are part of the mechanism to prevent the gases coming back. Somebody through whose hands they were passed has quickly nicked each one with a hammer. That means that the guns must wait until another set can be made which, because of the minute accuracy of the work, will take considerable time."

He then conducted me to one of the powerful engines that run the lathes. "This is in the usual condition of most of the new ones that are coming in," he said. "Some enemy agent contrives to put emery into the bearings. If we run them for a week that way, they are out of commission. This means that we have got to stop, take them apart, and clean them before we even use them. All this delay helps the enemy."

My mind went back to Essen and the volcanic activity I had witnessed there; of German workmen toiling in shifts incessantly to turn out guns and shells to rend limb from limb the soldiers of the Allies, our American lads among them. Yet here, in my own country, after more than a year of our participation in the war, I had seen evidence of the work which does not give the boys from home a fair chance in battles of machinery.

All that day, as I rode in the train, a picture for which I yearned kept recurring—a picture with a blank wall in the background. Yet, despite this feeling against the agents who work to make our soldiers fight

216 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

with one hand tied behind their backs, I am in hearty support of President Wilson's plea that there be no mob violence among us. That would not help us win the war but would be turned as a weapon against us. We should always act according to justice and law. Justice, however, embodies all possible protection to the men who are risking everything on the other side. And when we prove anybody among us guilty of deliberately aiding Germany, that person should be legally dealt with to the limit, and the news published broadcast as a deterrent to his co-workers.

CHAPTER IX

OUR PRISONER EXTRAORDINARY

THE air was filled with the softness of the English spring, as I sat in my Mayfair apartments overlooking Piccadilly and the park. The evening papers which had just come in were full of the great German retreat to the Hindenburg line, with stress laid upon Haig's mechanical problem of following up with all the machinery of his army.

Modern war is largely machinery, but not all. Gazing out across the park, I reflected that every day romance and adventure behind the scenes equal anything to be found in literature. I was just then interested in the attempt of an Irish officer to escape from Germany. Some time the world may be privileged to read the details of a band of men who built up a system and took risks that vie with those of the "Scarlet Pimpernell" in the days when the women of Paris knitted in rhythm with the guillotine.

There was a knock on the door, and the man whom I was expecting entered, closing it gently behind him. He was young, of wiry build, and of uncertain nationality.

"You are requested to advise me about getting into Germany," he said quietly.

Germany, perhaps later. It might be better if this man, with his special qualifications, first looked into

218 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

some German affairs in South America which were directed against all the Allies, but chiefly against the United States, the latter having already broken with Germany and was on the verge of entering the war.

One of the many lessons that I have learned from the struggle and my own participation in it, is the value of preliminary preparation for any task to be undertaken. I therefore started him on a three weeks' course of instruction, but rushed matters at the close of the second, when I got an inkling that one of the most important German prisoners in England was to be transferred to the United States.

"Go to South America by way of New York," I said. "He will be on the *Adriatic*. Get in touch with him and see if you can get on to the inside of his game."

That was in April, 1917. I next saw him in late September, when I got his signed report. He had done all that I expected—and more.

My man, whom I shall call Jules, soon perceived when aboard ship that some secrets are not closely kept; for there were vague rumours that a German spy was being transported to the United States for trial. Nobody could locate him, however, and interest in the matter soon died. Not so with Jules. He knew his Germany and the German officers, and on the fourth day was sure of his man, whose manner of walking on deck, particularly the heel-click when he stepped aside bowing to let a lady pass, showed unmistakably to the practised eye the mechanism inherent in the German officer.

On the fifth day after breakfast, while making a turn on the boat-deck, Jules came upon his suspect quite

alone. Attempts at conversation made little headway, however, beyond corroborating the fact that the stranger's excellent English betrayed a slight German accent.

Persistency, however, is one of Jules's most developed traits. After remarks about the weather, the passengers and the ship had drawn out only reluctant replies accompanied by furtive glances which betrayed the stranger's fear of being seen talking, Jules gradually switched the conversation to a comparison of vessels in peace time. He very reservedly favoured the North German Lloyd, explaining that, of course, as a neutral, he did not want to praise anything of the enemy of the country under whose flag he was sailing.

"But I thought you were English," said the stranger.

"Oh, no! I have lived a long time in England; but am a South American. I have also been much in Germany."

At this the stranger showed decided interest, and began to question Jules with great ability to see how much he knew about the Fatherland. My man began to answer him apparently with great care, but suddenly seemed to forget himself, as the conversation grew more lively, with the exclamation, "Well, you know it is not to be wondered at if I do favour the North German Lloyd, considering that my cousins hold heavy interests in it."

The stranger was surprised and delighted when Jules named the "cousins" with the correct German accent. He was still further delighted when Jules went on to explain that his country, particularly higher up, was intensely pro-German and that as a man who knew both

220 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Germany and England he hoped to be useful for propaganda service helpful to the former.

At this the stranger threw off all reserve, and, after a quick look up and down the deck to see that n body was in sight, he told Jules, with suppressed excitement, that they could work together and be of great service to one another. He took a piece of paper from his pocket, scribbled briefly upon it, held it so that Jules could read, then tore it up and threw it to the winds.

Only a name had been written on the card—but a magic name that thrilled the man who read it. The name was:

CAPTAIN FRANZ VON RINTELEN

Von Rintelen explained that he was granted most of the privileges of a passenger by giving his word of honour to the Scotland Yard man in charge of him that he would avoid conversation and would not mention his name to any one. "So that is why I wrote it," said the German naval officer, with a laugh.

He was especially indignant that he had been locked in his cabin during the first three days, and heaped abuse upon the British Government for exposing him thus to the dangers of the war zone, saying that it was a *violation of international law*. "Why, in case of attack," he added, "I should have been drowned like a rat in a trap."

Shades of the *Lusitania*, the *Arabia*, the *Falaba*, the *Sussex*! The little fishing vessels, the hospital ships with their helpless wounded, and the men shelled in open boats! Von Rintelen's bump of humour must certainly be a cavity.

Von Rintelen was so keen to make use of my man that he mapped out a course of future meetings. 1. After dinner, every evening they would meet at eight at the end of the second deck where it was pitch dark and always empty. 2. When the man who had trusted Rintelen on his word of honour, played chess in the smoking-room—a most absorbing game—they would meet in the reading room if it were empty. 3. They would, at certain hours, varied each day, walk on certain decks, also varied each day. At such times as they were not observed, they could communicate.

Next morning a rough wind cleared the starboard promenade deck to the convenience of the two men. In the early part of their long conversation, von Rintelen was at pains to emphasise his importance and family connections—something quite unnecessary for the well-informed Jules. He dwelt bitterly upon what he considered unfair treatment, that he had been captured by the British when on his way from America to Germany, travelling on a false passport. Much as he disliked being a prisoner in England, he relished even less the prospect of going to New York to stand trial for complicity in bomb-plotting. Donnington Hall had at any rate been a most comfortable prison, with the added convenience that he could communicate more or less regularly with the Deutsche Bank through Holland.

He explained his high position in the Bank and his alliance with Krupp's through the fact that his father-in-law, Herr von Kaufmann, was the man who arranged all the details of the German-Bulgarian alliance and was at the head of the whole Krupp organisation in Bulgaria. He is also related to Count Hecht, one of

222 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

the great agrarian leaders of the Conservative party in the Reichstag.

Before the bugle for lunch had blown, Rintelen became so thrilled in the anticipation of using my man that he again and again assured him that if he would carry out his instructions he would give him *carte blanche* any time he wished to go to Germany whether in war or peace.

"What are the details of the work you wish me to do?" Jules asked.

"They are many," said von Rintelen, quickly. "First I would impress upon you to remember accurately a certain code signal that must reach the Admiralty. That code——"

He was interrupted with a laugh up the deck. Two passengers apparently out to make the round as an appetiser for lunch, had lurched against the rail when the ship rolled in the trough of the wind-blown sea. They were so occupied with their own affairs that they failed to notice the two men. Even had they done so, they would probably have attached no significance to their being together. But the German naval captain, taking no chances, strolled on alone.

Jules camped in the reading-room during the afternoon as agreed, but the hours wore on to tea-time and from tea-time to dinner with no sign of von Rintelen.

"It will be hard luck," he reflected, "if he is locked up or has thought better of the matter and will not give me his instructions—and I was just going to get them, too."

Dinner over, Jules took up his stand in the pitch dark of the second deck. He had not long to wait. A shadowy figure passed close to him, but he could not be

sure in the dark that it was his man. He remembered that they had not agreed upon a signal for this emergency, but met the situation by softly whistling a line of *Die Lorelei*. The response showed the figure was von Rintelen.

"One good thing," began the latter, "is that no one will come looking for me with a torch. I notice that these dogs are taking every precaution against our U-boats, and there are strict regulations against any lights on deck from sunset to sunrise."

Jules intended to remind him of the code message, but such intention proved entirely unnecessary inasmuch as it was the first thing uppermost in his companion's mind.

"First of all, I would remind you to fix in your mind the phrase, RINTELEN MELDET. Later I will tell you how to get it to Germany. A German officer, especially a naval officer, never forgets that wherever he is, his first duty is to his Kaiser and his Fatherland. That duty transcends and nullifies everything else. It is, moreover, the duty of every diplomatic and consular officer, wherever stationed, to work incessantly ferreting out secrets, and always bearing in mind that even though the country in which he may find himself may not have at the time the status of an enemy it must always be considered a potential enemy."

A frank admission out there in the dark, with the wind howling and the sea foaming white against the hull, of the policy of modern Germany to go among the nations as the wolf in the fleece of the lamb.

"You have German blood in your veins, and you must be one of us in our war against the Anglo-Saxon powers of England and America," von Rintelen

224 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

breathed warmly, in his best Tirpitzian manner. "America has now joined actively in the war. If we tie up her efforts we shall be victorious in Europe; for we, who have inside information, are certain of the success of our submarine warfare. Personally I am equally certain that our plans in the United States will succeed, for we have laid them thoroughly. I know what I am talking about, for I have been the head of my country's organisation in America. It was the wish of Berlin that I keep in the background."

I would remind the reader that von Rintelen's opinions, as expressed on the *Adriatic* are historic, inasmuch as he, with Admiral von Hintze (now Foreign Minister in place of von Kühlmann), has long been the darling of the Kaiser, which makes his opinion the inside official one.

Von Rintelen expressed great faith in the success of:

1. The pro-German anti-war propaganda in America—his exact expression.
2. The destruction of important manufacturing plants in the United States.
3. Interference with railways and shipping.
4. Strikes.

He felt that American industry was increasingly prone to strikes because of the laxity of central discipline as compared with Germany. German agents would encourage this tendency, and would not only foment strikes but he hoped in the case of vital key industries to subsidise the strikers from a special fund to enable them to stay out indefinitely.

5. Political pressure. In this von Rintelen expressed great contempt for Americans in general and for certain politicians in particular, who, he said, would

blow up the whole country provided they got the price.

6. The probability that Germany could stir up so much trouble between Mexico and the United States that most of the already restricted activities of the latter would have to be used against her Southern neighbour.

7. He also hoped that the bases contemplated in Central American waters, as well as factories in Mexico, would enable an effective submarine campaign to be carried out on that side of the Atlantic. These were the hopes of Germany's directors at the time we entered the war. It is very comforting to know precisely just what von Rintelen counted upon, for we need only do the opposite to thwart him and his country.

It is noteworthy that von Rintelen expressed great surprise that America had declared war, to which he attributed purely mercenary motives. This opinion is of tremendous importance, for it concerns the psychological side of the war, which is the basic side. The greatest battles and military campaigns, with all their valour and with all their horror, are but incidents thrown in relief upon it.

In Chapter V I told how the humble soldiers of Hungary with whom I talked on the Italian front were victims of this mercenary delusion. That is understandable, for they are but dupes. But it seems rather difficult to credit the leaders with the belief that we are in the war solely for financial gain. Yet I feel that this is the true opinion of the Rintelens, the Ludendorffs, and the Hohenzollerns.

In the first place, they know in their hearts that they are in the war to make a territorially and economically greater Germany. They therefore naturally attribute

226 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

to others the motives which are their own. They are furthermore imbued with an idea difficult for Americans to comprehend, that unless we had financial or ulterior motives, we would have stood aside when Germany commanded.

During the crisis following the torpedoing of the *Sussex*, even mild Germans exclaimed to me: "But why should Americans be travelling on those ships when Germany says they have no right to do so?" All of which means that we can get along very nicely with the Germans if we can but devise some means of betaking ourselves to some other planet. If we can not do this, there remains only the alternative of physically thrashing them until they know they are beaten.

No doubt Jules reflected in similar vein as he listened to von Rintelen, while the wind whistled down the deck and the ship lurched in the waves.

"We had better play safe to-morrow," said the Kaiser's master-agent. "Let us meet here in the evening, after eight, when I shall have prepared for you a list of definite instructions. Nothing must be written. You had better repeat them after me until you know them by heart."

Next day was a long one for Jules.

Rintelen was on time in the evening, however. "You will earn my eternal gratitude if you will carry out the following as soon as possible after you land," he directed:

"1. If America has not already broken diplomatic relations with Austria-Hungary or Turkey or Bulgaria, go to the diplomatic heads of one of these in Washing-

ton and tell them that you crossed with me. Ask him to communicate immediately with Berlin with regard to freeing me from America. I can be of great service to my country should I get to Mexico or elsewhere,—and there are further reasons why my Government will do everything to set me free.

"We have practised reprisals successfully against the English. We can doubtless do the same against the Americans. In a case of reprisals, it might be best to make an attempt with the English first. Have the diplomat with whom you deal send word to Berlin suggesting a trial of the British Colonel Napier similar to the one which I shall undergo in America. Also, to choose two or three of the most important English prisoners of war and use them as hostages.

"That piece of business concluded, or rather in advance of it, have them send the code message RINTELEN MELDET. That is most important of all. The entire admiralty staff will jump in the air for joy when they receive it.

"2. Have them also notify Berlin that this ship took a course off Ireland marked '*Unfit for navigation.*' Berlin will probably understand which course is meant, and our U-boats will sow that course with mines.

"3. Should anything prevent you going to Washington, or should you be unable to get in touch with any of the diplomats mentioned please go to Mexico and give the same messages to von Eckhardt, the leader of German enterprise there. In that case, it would be also well to have him advise President Carranza to take three of the most prominent American citizens he can lay his hands on and practise reprisals upon them until I am set free on Mexican soil.

"4. Of my great funds, I still have \$400,000 of my

228 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

own in American banks. Remind whatever diplomat you confer with to get hold of this sum.

"5. I will give you the name of a big New York business man who can advance you any funds you may need. He and his whole office are staunchly German in spite of appearances. He can furthermore advance you capital for any enterprises which he approves. This he will probably do through a Mexican firm . . . a little device we have adopted to throw the American Secret Service off the track."

In subsequent meetings Captain von Rintelen made certain that Jules could repeat these instructions verbatim. In everything, however, he impressed Jules with the conviction that he greatly feared being brought to trial in America.

When Jules returned to South America from New York, he visited von Rintelen, then awaiting trial. This was a custom of some of von Rintelen's friends. The officer prisoner, who has at least the quality of never giving up, told him that rare good fortune had enabled him to send all his messages direct to Berlin with Admiral von Hintze, who was travelling through New York from Pekin to the Wilhelmstrasse on a diplomatic passport. Von Rintelen added that he also gave the Admiral some up-to-the-minute shipping news.

That von Rintelen's messages bore fruit, was evidenced in the newspapers of June 8th, 1918, when Washington published Secretary Lansing's defiance to the Kaiser in the following diplomatic correspondence:

On April 20, 1918, the Swiss minister presented to the State Department the following note from the German government.

OUR PRISONER EXTRAORDINARY 229

"On Dec. 20, 1917, the merchant and interpreter, Siegfried Paul London, a citizen of the United States, was condemned to death by court-martial at Warsaw for treason as a spy. The governor-general of Warsaw, exercising clemency on Jan. 9, 1918, commuted this sentence to 10 years' penal servitude. According to facts established at the court-martial, London obtained citizenship in the year 1887. He is married to an American citizen, May Leonhard.

"London was found guilty because, for the period from the beginning of the war until about May, 1915, he served the enemy as a spy. He was arrested on this account as early as Aug. 27, 1915. He succeeded, however, in escaping, but was recaptured on Sept. 24, 1917. For this reason the chief proceedings against him took place only recently.

"Up to the present time, the efforts of the German government to effect an improvement in the situation of Capt. Rintelen, who passed into the hands of the American authorities by reason of acts of the British government contrary to international law, have been unsuccessful. The attempt to bring to a halt the criminal proceedings brought against him in America and to secure his release, has likewise been without result. In order to lend greater emphasis to the protests which have been lodged with the American government the German government contemplates some appropriate measures of reprisal. It would, however, prefer to avoid the contingency that persons be taken and made to suffer because the government of the United States was apparently not sufficiently cognisant of its international obligations toward a German subject.

"Before making a definite decision the German government believes it should propose to the government of the United States that Captain von Rintelen be set at

230 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

liberty by exchange for the American citizen Paul London, who was condemned to death for espionage, and whose sentence was later commuted to 10 years' penal servitude, and that Captain von Rintelen be permitted forthwith to return to Germany. Should the government of the United States agree to this proposal, the German government would take steps that London's uncompleted term of imprisonment be remitted and that he be set at liberty in order that he may immediately leave the country."

To this communication Secretary Lansing sent the following reply through the Swiss minister:

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your memorandum of April 13, 1918, communicating a translation of a note verbale from the German government, transmitted by the Swiss political department, proposing the exchange of Capt. Franz von Rintelen for Siegfried Paul London, an alleged American citizen condemned to 10 years' penal servitude in Germany. The German government threatens measures of reprisal if Rintelen is not released or exchanged for London.

"In reply, I have the honour to advise you that this Government can not consider the exchange of Rintelen for London, nor can it consider the release of Rintelen or interference in the due process of law in his case.

"The threat of the German government to retaliate by making Americans in Germany suffer clearly implies that the Government proposes to adopt the principle that the reprisals occasioning physical suffering are legitimate and necessary in order to enforce demands from one belligerent to another. The Government of the

OUR PRISONER EXTRAORDINARY 231

United States acknowledges no such principle, and would suggest that it would be wise for the German Government to consider that if it acts upon that principle it will inevitably be understood to invite similar reciprocal action on the part of the United States with respect to the great number of German subjects in this country. It is assumed that the German Government before acting will give due reflection and due weight to this consideration.

"I beg that you will be good enough to bring the foregoing statement to the attention of the German Government."

Secretary Lansing's reply is magnificently straight to the point, with the right punch. It indicates that Washington thoroughly understands the Germans and is determined to deal with them in the only effective way.

CHAPTER X

FOOTLIGHT WARFARE

SINCE my return to America I have seen some war plays,—in which the villain rôle usually falls to the Kaiser or some of his subjects.

It might be interesting and instructive to the reader to take a peep at the other side. The Germans are a theatre-going race. During the war their Government has not only refrained from interfering with public amusements but has fostered them. In France and Italy, war-time restaurants and cafés are, for the most part, establishments solely for the replenishment of the interior. In Germany, on the other hand, there has been no diminution of music.

German theatres have continued to flourish. To such an extent do the authorities believe in fostering good spirit among the food-ticketed stay-at-homes that they have exempted the majority of actors. The opera in Berlin, Vienna, Dresden, and other centres has been given as in peace, as have also the standard German dramas of Lessing, Schiller, Goethe and Sudermann.

Shakespeare continues to be played far more in Germany than in England. It is the one product bearing the English hall-mark against which the German has not raged. Indeed, many Germans refer to the immortal bard as *Unser Shakespeare*. Just as some

German professors have devoted genealogical treatises to prove that Christ is a German, so do some of their fellow miracle-men seriously claim Shakespeare as German because "only the Germans fully appreciate him," and therefore he and the spirit of Germany are one. In fact, Herr Doktor Hermann Scheffauer has written at length to show that Shakespeare's soul, "disgusted with England's mercenary warfare," has moved from Stratford to Weimar. Give the German professor a gullible public, and he will prove anything. That is why it is so easy for him—at home—to demonstrate that Germany had the war wished upon her by a jealous world.

I saw my first German war play in December, 1914. It bore the strikingly significant title of *Wir Barbaren* (We Barbarians), and was given all over Germany. It was a comedy with music, dealing, as its ironic title indicates, with the charges preferred against Germany by her enemies that she is conducting operations in a manner that would delight the heart of Attila.

When I attended the piece in Frankfort the immense Circus Schumann seating 4,000 people was packed.

The action opens on July 31, 1914, fixed by the author, Herr Fritz Odemar, as the date when his typical Berlin family is roused from the comfort of the breakfast table by the news that "all" the Fatherland's foes have simultaneously and treacherously declared war upon her.

Leitmotif: "German Unity." Father, mother, daughter, son, daughter's sweetheart, house-porter, postman, cook — everybody — aflame with fiery patriotism. "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles!" is wafted

234 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

through the windows from the street, to the accompaniment of the trample of marching crowds. The mother, in bad English which she proceeds to air—a typical touch—exclaims: “Zie English gentlemens—can it be?” Her menfolk stand and snarl in rage and repeat in accents of scorn, “Zie gentlemens!” There are grandiloquent apotheoses to the might and right of the German Fatherland, and the curtain falls and an impromptu chorus by everybody in the scene—*Die Wacht am Rhein*.” It is now the audience’s cue to play its part. It has mastered its lines perfectly, and the amphitheatre rings promptly with as hearty an outburst of cheers as one would hear on an American football field.

The second act develops a delightfully ideal German family life and emphasises the lofty sentiments which fire both the men who are leaving for the front and the women patriots who are remaining behind to knit and nurse. The curtain has hardly dropped when there is a rush of usher-waiters down the aisles carrying huge trays covered with steins of beer—a little entr’acte which happily transfers some of the idealism to the audience’s side of the footlights.

Act III finds us behind an extremely realistic trench on the fighting line in Belgium. It is the great act which won for the author the Kaiser’s recognition for valuable services rendered on the home front.

The sufferings of the troops—it is already winter—are depicted, and particularly the lighthearted humour with which they are borne. More home touches when field-postman arrives with letters. As a people, the theatre-going Germans can get more for their money in the way of sentiment and emotion than can any

other people. Hence, audible sobs when the letters were given out. A parcel of newspapers is there for the company in the trench. A sergeant eagerly surrounded by the men reads aloud: "Russians defeated by von Hindenburg." (Audience explodes, shrieking, "Hoch, Hindenburg! Napoleon von Hindenburg! Hoch!") The sergeant continues: "Belgrade Fallen!" (More vociferous cheers, this time for Austria.) "Belgium Crushed!" (Sighs of satisfaction and relief.)

A rush in the wings toward which the soldiers look. Somebody is coming, and the audience holds its expectant breath. A French soldier enters, bright in historic red trousers and cap. A disgustingly pitiable object, shuddering with terror of anticipated brutal treatment, he throws himself on the ground and crawls up to the strutting Prussian captain, bleating incessantly, "Spare my life! Spare my life!" Prussian captain, magnanimity personified, motions that the prisoner be led off, warmed up, and fed. (Audience indulges in smiles, nudges, nods and hand-clappings, indicating pride in German strength and humanitarianism.) Who said "barbarians"?

The night grows colder, and the Germans button their great coats. Presently the French prisoner is again seen, devouring ravenously a huge hunk of rye bread—he has not eaten for days. Poor fellow! he has no great coat to button about him. He shivers visibly. A German soldier moves into a position sufficiently conspicuous to attract the spectators' attention to the fact that he is looking at the cold, shaking enemy. The audience scarcely breathes as he begins to unbutton his coat and slowly subtracts his arms from the warm sleeves. Good Heavens! Is he going to give it

236 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

to the Frenchman? The suspense heightens as he professes it to the amazed prisoner who, after accepting it, goes to a corner and lies down to sleep.

Now came another example of the thousands I have witnessed of the highly-developed German characteristic of overdoing nearly everything. Another soldier removes his coat, tiptoes to the figure in the corner so as not to wake him up, and carefully places the garment, blanket-like, upon him. Another does likewise, and then another, until five of them, after piling their coats on the slumbering *poilu*, move to the opposite corner of the stage to shiver *en bloc*.

When the Germans set out to prove anything they believe in going the limit. The audience is taking it all seriously. Dry eyes are now the exception. Who said "barbarians"? Who called us "Huns"? The act closes with *unter-offizier* singing a ten-verse song on the theme that the Germans are not barbarians, with the chorus at the end of each verse concluding: "Ein Deutscher Held ist kein Barbar." (A German Hero is no Barbarian.) This, need I say, brought down the house.

Act V gives us another scene in the bosom of the Berlin family. Fritz, the son of the household, is at the Front; likewise, Karl, the daughter's sweetheart, ditto Hans, the house-porter's offspring. *Fraülein* is poring over a book of poems of which her lover in the trenches has a duplicate, in "code," so that when they exchange letters, they may call attention to the particular page, 98 or 63, or whatever it may be, which contains the particular ditty in the mind of the one who wrote. Then the other turns to it, and the wireless language of love speaks.

Word arrives,—a casualty list—that Fritz is wounded, Hans missing. Both fathers give way to anguish. Karl has been wounded too, for before the final curtain, now about to descend, he and Fritz enter, arms in slings. (In audience, suppressed tears, sobs of joy.) Family reunion, much of embracing, weeping, and kissing. The "Heroes of Belgium" start in to recount their glorious experiences. Finale: "Die Wacht am Rhein" by the assembled company, with audience standing and joining in. Then a parting tornado of *Hochs* and hurrahs, and the usual stampede for the cloak-rooms.

"Das Ausland sollte das Stück nur 'mal sehen!" (Foreign countries should just see this piece), sighs a portly dowager.

It has been a great night. Four thousand Germans are convinced that "we" are *not* "barbarians."

I celebrated Washington's Birthday, 1916, by attending in Berlin a performance of the widely advertised "Unsere Feinde—Grosses Patriotisches Schauspiel aus der Gegenwart in 4 Akten" (Our Enemies—Great Patriotic Performance of the Present Day in 4 Acts). This show delighted Berlin afternoon and evening for a full season.

Act I. On the Isonzo. Italian and Austrian soldiers succeed one another in the early scenes, the former making a uniformly unfavourable impression. An unprepossessing lot, they indulge in such objectionable tactics as declaring war on Austria-Hungary, attempting to win the belle of the village by force of arms, and preparing to shoot father of same in cold blood. The latter is happily rescued by the Austrians in a finale in which the Italians prove to be such exceedingly bad

238 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

fighters that they throw away most of their arms while running for safety. The only thing that saved them from pursuit was the musical temperament of the victorious captain who, in the true manner of a Franz Lehar or Leo Fall operetta hero, picked up a violin and played out his heart to the beautiful rescued daughter.

Though the audience enjoyed the waltz, perhaps later in their military after-thoughts, they evolved a possible explanation of why their ally has never proved able to follow through an offensive.

Act II. Winter in the Vosges, with realistic scenes of mountain batteries going into action, troops on skis, and Red Cross dogs sniffing out the wounded. Then a deserted stage, save for the fallen, and a French peasant enters to rob the dead. The thumbs in the arena are turned down apparently, however, and the appetite of the onlookers for enemy "cussedness" is not sated until the peasant cuts the throats of the wounded. I was told that in the first performances he had indulged only in robbery, but that the act went very much better after the addition of the murder scene.

Act III. The battle on the Narew. The Cossacks attack the Austro-Hungarian infantry but are as quickly disposed of as in an official report. Only one volley is necessary for these hirsute cavalrymen, and those who do not conveniently slide dead from their horses, are dragged from them, ten-foot lances and all, and forthwith bundled into waiting waggons for early shipment to Germany.

But Russia still disputes the Narew river. The Austro-German force lies concealed as a strong body of Russian infantry enters the arena. The Russians appear businesslike and determined. They are un-

aware that the enemy is in the vicinity, and consequently press forward with vigour.

"Surrender!" yells the leader of the men in ambush.

The immediate effect of his command is startling. Whereas the performers had, since the very beginning of the first act, appeared to lack team-work, all the Russians now worked together in amazing unison. Like one man they threw their rifles to the ground, dropped to their knees, and in a flash two Russian hands were stretched rigid and weaponless above each Russian head.

It was clearly the most perfectly rehearsed business in the show, and I laughed.

A young officer beside me frowned. "I don't like it," he said.

"Not a bad idea, though," I remarked. "The surrender of the Russians without a shot being fired delights the audience and saves ammunition expenses for the management."

"But such things are taken seriously by the stay-at-homes, and they don't realise that we in the army have to fight hard to defeat our enemies. Such representations and newspaper accounts of enemy faint-heartedness will tend to diminish our heroic standing in the public eye."

Act IV. Constantinople and the Golden Horn. The audience cheers as Sultan Mohammed V receives the ambassadors of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. This little ocular demonstration of unity concluded, the heroes of the *Emden*, headed by Lieutenant von Mücke, march upon the stage, while the audience rises to its feet.

These gone, English, French and Russian prisoners

240 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

are led on under Turkish guard. From a nearby minaret sounds the call for evening prayer. The Mohammedans prostrate themselves upon the earth. The Christian prisoners having failed to imitate their example, are beaten to the ground, to the deep satisfaction of the audience.

Thus in Berlin is the will of Allah done!

I saw the last of my German war plays in Stuttgart, where I witnessed the famous three-act drama—"In Dollarland." The action took place in New York during 1916. The play hinges upon the mental anguish of a group of Germans cut off from their beloved Fatherland and forced to live among money-grubbing Yankees. Politics enter continually.

On one occasion, one of the characters remarks: "Money will do anything in the United States. It should be great satisfaction to our good Kaiser to know that he will never have to spill any German blood when dealing with America. He will always be able to buy what he wants over here."

At which Stuttgart breathed more easily and applauded.

The hero has had the terrible misfortune—so feel his parents—to fall in love with the daughter of a wealthy American. To be sure, she has the redeeming quality of having once studied in Germany. She might reform, but they can not tolerate the father who, like all the rest of his countrymen, cares for nothing but the accumulation of money. This is, of course, particularly obnoxious to a hero whom you generally hear before you see, owing to his habit of bursting forth

into idyllic snatches of song; and fifty per cent of whose conversation consists of quotations from classic German and Latin writers.

I reflected that he might have been much more interesting and true to life if he had been mixed up in some sort of a bomb-plot, but perhaps the censor would have objected to such realism.

Act III witnesses a tremendous transformation of the objectionable character in the piece—the rich father. His contact with the idealistic colony of Kultur devotees, sets him thinking that there are higher things in life than amassing fortunes. He gives a dinner to the hero and his temperamental coterie in which he denounces his country's unneutral behaviour in "making ammunition for the enemies of a peace-loving nation fighting for its existence under its peace-loving Emperor." He then solemnly takes down the picture of President Wilson and uses it to step upon while he puts up a picture of William II.

Stuttgart goes wild.

The same evening the reformed father conveniently discovers that his great-grandparents came from Germany, and that his name of Stone had simply been anglicised. The others could not go to Germany now, but he would do so and would become a naturalised subject of the Kaiser.

I reflected that this might be difficult if the German authorities learned of his past as revealed in Acts I and II, for I recalled that Clause 2 of the German naturalisation regulations reads—without any intentional humour: "*A certificate of naturalisation may be granted to foreigners only when they have led an unblemished life.*"

242 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Stuttgart sobbed when he went on to say that he would begin life afresh in the land of his ancestors.

A faraway look came into the eyes of the Germans gathered about him. He could go, for he could still retain his American nationality and cross the seas; but they—oh, the anguish of it all, they must remain behind; for they were Germans.

Then the hero had a bright idea—his first in three acts.

"But father-in-law-to-be," he exclaimed, "you can take us all with you back to our dear Fatherland."

A pause and a hush as the company stares in amazement at the speaker. The dramatic climax has arrived.

"But we are Germans, and the British fleet will not let us cross," all cry in unison.

"But have you forgotten that father-in-law is rich, and that money will buy anything in America? Father-in-law will buy American passports for all of us."

At this the whole company surged around the hero and embraced him, then raised their glasses and sang, "In der Heimat."

Stuttgart could go to bed happy. Why worry about America? Switch on the U-boat war!

CHAPTER XI

A DUSTY VOLUME IN BERLIN

FOUR of us rose from our coffee-substitute in the Café Viktoria, Berlin. Among other things, we had been glancing over some London newspapers to which the Café still continued to subscribe, despite long years of war. That is, two of us, a fellow-American lawyer and I, looked at these papers. Our companions, two Germans lawyers of repute, refused to look at them. "Nothing but lies," they said.

We adjourned to the palatial offices of the two Germans, where we sat down in the library to talk war. The "professor-lawyers" preferred this to working on cases inasmuch as they spent most of their time writing newspaper articles and bulky pamphlets which the Government could export by the ton to convince neutrals that Germany is always right.

A friend of one entered and joined us. He looked military, every inch of him, in his well-fitting uniform of a major of artillery. He was the scion to a great Junker estate in Pomerania. "We were just discussing the causes of the war," my fellow-American explained.

The major merely shrugged his shoulders in a manner which seemed to suggest that such a discussion would bore him. I saw that gathered in the room were contrasting types of Germans and was struck with an idea.

I never believed in waiting for news to come to me. My method of drawing out opinions when I was among Germans was to take the other side of the question, so as to put them on the defensive. German education has left debate and argument almost entirely out of its curriculum. There is a reason for this. With us, school-debating training is based, as a rule, upon a discussion of political questions. The German subject is not supposed to discuss political matters, but unquestioningly to obey military and police regulations. This explains, in part, why even German professors argue on the war as though they were children. Like the majority of their countrymen, they are easy to anger when crossed in debate. Making use of this characteristic, I was often enabled to obtain honest opinions, even from members of the Wilhelmstrasse. Their guarded selves would disappear and their real selves would momentarily flash out—flashes to which I attribute vastly greater importance than all the carefully thought-out interviews with which they have deluged newspaper correspondents. It was through such flashes that I was able accurately to forecast the U-boat policy which would eventually drive us into war.

To afford me a loophole, I often used the simple, but effective device of putting my questions in a form which I could use for protection in case they were charged against me to show that I was an anti-German bent on planting seditious ideas. Thus I would say, for example, after the manner of an impartial judge, "Some among your enemies assert that your U-boat commanders are a worse set of pirates than any that ever sailed the Spanish Main." Although this happens

to be my opinion, the form in which I made the statement did not, from the legal aspect, make it necessarily so.

Adopting these tactics in the Berlin office that afternoon, I turned to the major and remarked, "Everywhere in Germany I always find stress laid upon the declaration that England started the war. The majority of people that I have met outside of Germany, on the contrary, express the opinion that it was Germany that——"

"Lies, English lies!" interrupted both professor-lawyers, almost in unison.

The major, however, merely shrugged his shoulders again. "Why all this quibbling!" he exclaimed, with the least trace of petulance. "Germany's world-position depends first of all upon her army. To-day our troops are sweeping rapidly forward through Roumania. If Russia has any strength left, why doesn't she help her new ally?" And he laughed with satisfaction. "We can be proud of our army. Throughout history, other nations, when strong enough to do so, have made war. Why do outsiders cry baby because Germany does so?"

I saw the iron hot and took a chance. "But many of them have expressed surprise that Germany brought on the war just when she did," I ventured.

"We did so because we thought it was our best time!" snapped the major.

For a moment, I thought I had been dreaming. At last I had found a German—a forerunner to Lichnowsky and Mühlön—who expressed himself honestly on, "Who caused the war?" I had searched the Empire from the north to the south, and from the east to the

246 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

west, thus far without success. At last I could extinguish my Diogenean lantern.

The two publicity professor-lawyers were almost in a state of collapse. Their sacred duty of convincing all neutrals as to Germany's innocence had received an unexpected and deplorable setback from this painfully frank Junker militarist. Give them time and the quietness of their studies, and they would doubtless evolve a lengthy explanatory antidote to the major's poison. Perhaps they would explain that the long strain of war had wrecked his nerves. Under the pressure of discussion in company, however, they could only phonographically splutter: "Our Kaiser wanted no war!" "Germany has always wanted to live in peace and let other nations live in peace!" "For forty years Germany remained at peace. This is proof that we did not want war!"

This remarkable "proof" was always emphasised in early Teuton propaganda. I found great numbers of American tourists leaving Germany swallowing it and quoting it. To them, of course, it was of no importance that the "forty years at peace" statement leaves entirely out of account certain Imperial Hohenzollern and Hapsburg tendencies denoted by such incidents as Admiral von Diedrich's affair with Admiral Dewey at Manila Bay in 1898, the German methods in the Boxer uprising of 1900, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 in violation of agreement, the Morocco crisis of 1911. Furthermore, there was Germany's war with the Hereros in Africa. But perhaps she regarded this as butchery and not war.

While the professors continued to play the old official

records, I reached, without rising from my chair, for a bulky, yellow-bound volume—a rare volume, but seldom found throughout the world and even more seldom read. In that Berlin office it was covered with the dust of years.

I was familiar with its contents. I said nothing; but, wholly absorbed, after having blown from the top some of the dust, I read on until called back to the discussion around me by one of the professor-lawyers shrieking, "Anybody who says that Germany wanted war is a *Schweinhund* (pigdog)."

Whereupon the major sought to change the subject by remarking, "You seem to have found a very interesting book."

"Just 'a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,'" I observed, changing from the language of Heinrich Heine to that of Edgar Allan Poe. "Perhaps you would like to have me read you a few pages."

My American friend squirmed uneasily, pulled out his watch and suggested that we should be going. He knew me and once remarked that if I were lost in Germany, the most likely places to look for me would be behind *Streng Verboten* (Strictly forbidden) signs. In the present instance he feared that I was again about to play with fire.

I was. While the others listened, I read in unemotional tones and without the slightest comment, three speeches from the Minutes of the First Hague Conference of 1899, relating to the limitations of armaments as a means towards peace—speeches which made a delightful contrast with the statements of the professor-lawyers.

Here is what I read: (The italics are mine.)

248 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Colonel Gilinsky (Military delegate for Russia):

"The programme of the Russian Government has two objects. The first, solely humanitarian, is to diminish the possibility of war, but should war take place to reduce sufferings to a minimum.

"The second object is founded upon economic consideration—to diminish as much as possible the enormous financial burden which all nations find themselves obliged to endure to support armies in time of peace.

"On the first task, designated commissions are working to elaborate the laws and customs of war on sea and land. I hope that their work will be crowned with success.

"But may I ask, gentlemen, if the people whom we represent at this Conference will be entirely satisfied if when we go from here we bring to them a set of rules for war and nothing for time of peace—nothing to limit the great army of peace which weighs so heavily upon the various nations, this army which oppresses them to the point that a state of open warfare might be preferable to this muffled warfare?

"This continual competition builds up increasingly greater armies, more numerous in time of peace than they were at the height of the greatest wars. The various nations have been accustomed to support actual war only every twenty or thirty years. It is the everlasting army of peace which threatens to ruin the nations with its steady increase of numbers and frequent changes of armaments.

"Some say, to be sure, that although armies have greatly increased, populations also increase, and therefore the burden of expense falls upon an increasing number of contributors. Is it not true, however, that army increase is out of all proportion to population

increase? *Indeed, military expense swallows up a large part of the receipts of a country to an extent that the support of troops in time of peace is becoming a burden too heavy to be endured.*

"I have heard it said that money spent on armament remains in the country. That may be true for the countries who manufacture their own weapons, but even for them is there any real advantage for the population as a whole?

"Moreover, the continual increase of armies misses its object because the proportion between the forces of the different nations remains always the same, for when one government increases the number of its battalions its neighbour makes a proportional increase.

"These are the facts, then, which prompt my sovereign and my government to propose a limitation, if only for a time, of the increase of armaments."

Colonel von Schwartzhoff (Germany's Delegate, Military):

"As far as Germany is concerned, I can completely reassure her friends in regard to war-burdens and relieve them of all beneficent anguish. German people are not bending under the weight of taxation. They are not being dragged into an abyss. Quite the contrary, with us public and private wealth are increasing, and the standard of life is raised from year to year.

"As to the compulsory military service which is intimately linked up with this question, Germany does not regard it as a crushing burden but as a sacred and patriotic duty to which it owes its existence, its prosperity, its future.

"Men such as Colonel Gilinsky fear that excessive armaments may lead to war. For my part, I have too

250 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

much confidence in the wisdom of sovereigns to entertain any such fears.

"It is impossible for a group of nations to regulate any one nation's military affairs—which include such intricate matters as public instruction, duration of active service, numbers of units, totals for peace and for war, military obligations of former soldiers, railway systems, and the number and situation of fortifications. Each nation must organise itself according to its character, its history, its traditions, its economic resources, and its geographical situation."

M. Leon Bourgeois (Head of French Delegation):

"I have listened with the closest attention to the remarkable speech of Colonel von Schwartzhoff. *He has forcibly presented the technical objections against our adopting the limitations of armaments proposed by Colonel Gilinsky.*

"It does not seem to me that in his objections he adhered to the spirit which has prompted us to gather here. Instead he has shown that Germany would support easily her military expense while she, at the same time, is developing rapidly economically. In this respect I belong to a country which bears just as lightly the personal and financial obligations which the service of national defence imposes upon its citizens and we hope to be able to show next year that we have not hindered our production or our economic prosperity.

"But surely, Colonel von Schwartzhoff will recognise with me that if in his nation and in mine the very considerable resources devoted to military organisation should be devoted in part to peaceful and productive activity the well-being of each nation would be rapidly increased.

"We are not here, however, solely to consider our own

particular country. Our task is higher. We are gathered to examine the situation of the world as a whole. If we deliberate in this spirit, we shall find, I hope, a way to give expression to the thought that the limitations of armaments would benefit all humanity. And we should thus give to our governments the moral support necessary for them to follow this noble object.

"Gentlemen, the purpose of civilisation, as it appears to us, is to supplant more and more the battle for life between man and man with an agreement among them to stand together in the battle against the forces of nature."

The five men listened without a word while I read. When I had finished and put the volume back in its place, they continued silent until he who had cried that any one who said that Germany wanted war was a *Schweinhund* conveniently remembered that he had an engagement. Whereupon, we quietly dispersed without any comment upon speeches that clearly revealed which of the great powers was looking forward to war some nineteen years ago.

The truth is that Germany plainly showed her hand at the Hague.

Colonel von Schwartzhoff's subsequent remarks showed that he was totally unable to comprehend the lofty sentiments enunciated by Monsieur Bourgeois. His outlook upon international affairs is wholly different from ours. He is a Prussian Militarist, a member of the dominating class of Germany. This means that in world affairs he thinks as though his brain were encased in a high-explosive shell.

CHAPTER XII

THE MOTHERS ACROSS THE SEA

THERE is a well shaded path at Potsdam winding down from Sans Souci, the simple and charming palace of Frederick the Great, to the huge and gorgeous palace of the Kaiser. To the left is the historic windmill with its legend woven about Frederick, and not far from this an old woman stands by her post-card collection. I was strolling along this path one hot morning in the third summer of the war, and paused to chat with her a while. I remembered the brisk business she did in days of peace and commented on the change to the present solitude. She deplored the lack of visitors, and then turned to politics.

"Such a terrible war," she sighed, "and it seems in a way the more terrible when we think that the King of England conspires against his own cousin. Alas, our poor Kaiser!"

There are unnumbered thousands of different viewpoints of this war. This guileless woman, reared on the historic soil of the Hohenzollerns, accustomed to the pomp of Court carriages, seeing the railway to the Wildpark cleared for His Majesty, and the drill of Prussian Guards on the Bornstädter Field beyond the trees—has one of them.

"And to think that America too does not behave in a neutral manner, but makes ammunition for our enemies!"

THE MOTHERS ACROSS THE SEA 253

But thank God that she, also, cannot make war upon us."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Wilson and his kind are afraid. There are too many Germans in America. Wilson would fear civil war."

She was reciting one of the common beliefs in Germany, and then went on with the usual "government ordered" arguments about the war until I was again feeling miserable. What to me was simply one more example of the idea that fettered the German people to the German government.

For the thousandth time I was filled with resentment against the whole system, and was about to explain a few points from a non-Germanic angle when she covered her eyes for a moment, and then brushed away a tear. In a downward pause, I tactlessly asked if she had anybody in the war.

Then came the deluge. Her whole frame shook. "I had two sons," she began, and then broke down. Both, I learned between sobs, had been killed within a few weeks of the battle of the Somme.

My logic slipped out of gear for the time. My "explanations" never reached my lips. My heart went out to her, for she was a mother, sorrowing over the loss of the two lads she had reared to manhood only to have them suddenly snatched from her life, now an empty life from which hope had flown, with nothing to do but stand by her post card in that peaceful shaded

Sans Souci and wonder how one cousin could be so unkind to another.

It's a long way from Potsdam to the Bulgarian-Serbian frontier. After having been with the Austro-

254 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Hungarian army against the Serbs, I felt a peculiar thrill at the realisation that I was with the mysterious other side after a circuitous Balkan journey when the wheezing train from Sophia pulled up at the first Serbian station of Pirot.

A battered and tattered collection of soldiers turned as they filed into the carriages to their women folks who had come to say good-bye. Two tarried at the end of the line, a father and son, whose story I learned later. The boy limped a little, for his wounded foot was not entirely healed. Though all but he had entered, his mother, saying nothing, threw her arms around him as if she felt that by holding him tight she might still somehow prevent him being torn from her by war's necessity. Not until the last warning "All aboard," this time addressed to the lad in her arms, did she step back to let him limp after his father.

A simple peasant woman, her mother's eyes mirrored sharply the agonies of her struggle to stifle her feelings, and bravely she waved her last farewell as the train pulled out.

There are thousands of war faces vividly and forever engraved on my memory. Hers is one. She had grown older than her husband in her life of mountain toil; hard work had stiffened her frame and deeply seared her face. Immovable she stood on that rough platform in the last light of the day, her eyes transfixed to a fading carriage window until it curved gently and was gone.

I saw her clench her hands and bite her lips fighting her feelings to the end in order to be brave when bidding all she held dear in the world what might be eternally good-bye. One last look into the twilight whence they

went, then the agony in her eyes intensified until the strain was relieved by a torrent of tears that scalded the furrows now grown deeper. The man and the boy were merely on their way to fight the Kaiser's big machine, but the lonely mother had to totter back to her mountain home to wait and eat out her heart.

How strange, I reflected, to find that Serbs have human emotions! One might never have suspected it after a sojourn in Austria-Hungary.

Another frontier, swept by blasts of war. I was with the Russian rear guard falling back from the last corner of the Bukowina into Bessarabia. The retreat was so rapid that a few civilians were still in the houses along the left bank of the Pruth River. Shells had begun to drop into these when a peasant woman, having hastily prepared to flee, came out of a back yard pulling a little cart in which sat a couple of babies beside a bundle of household goods, while behind the cart two other youngsters, hardly more than babies, lent their tiny strength. The woman struggled toward the road, then remembered something and rushed back to the house. They seemed out of place, those tots and their shallow cart on a stage that was set for war—a stage across which wearied infantry dragged their feet, while artillery clanked and Cossacks walked their horses in the slow rhythm of retreat. I saw all this, but somehow the doll-like scene between the moving column and the river turned my eyes back as I marched.

A whistling sound, first faint in the west, grew rapidly to a shriek which increased until it abruptly terminated in a splintering crash, followed by a black column of smoke and earth thrown up from the spot where the cart had been. A figure darted from the

256 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

house. But the forces of the Czar moved ever eastward and the last I saw of that little wayside tragedy was the mother groping distractedly on her hands and knees on the blackened ground, blood mixed with the shredded flesh of her little ones.

A few nights later still fighting rear-guard actions along the Pruth, we arrived at dark in the village of Boyan. The night was clear and bitter cold, and I was glad to get quarters in a simple Polish cottage. Dog tired, I had thrown myself down on one of the two beds in the room, when the mother of the family came from the adjoining room with her little girl of five whom she tucked into the other bed. Before doing so, however, the child knelt down to pray while her mother helped her with a saddened faraway look in her eyes. On the frozen river road I could hear the Russian artillery clanking and grinding, while in the stable at the rear of the house the war horses champed and pawed the ground. A sentry shot rang out by the river, an Austrian machine-gun tack-tacked on the opposite bank, but the child prayed on. Boyan is the last village in that corner of Austria-Hungary, and her soldier father had been snatched from home at Austria's first call to arms. The tide of war had ebbed and flowed along the river, leaving the Russian line between the father and his home. He might be living, he might be dead. No word had come from him. He might even be with the attacking force across the river, the force which tomorrow might shell his humble Polish home. No usual prayer was that prayer of the child, and no wonder the mother's eyes were saddened and faraway when the little one begged God to save her mamma and the house in

THE MOTHERS ACROSS THE SEA 257

which they lived and to bring her daddy back home again—soon.

One of the oddities of the world and of the war is that those who do the most usually make the least fuss. In the autumn of 1916 I was cutting across the North Sea on a little five hundred ton British vessel with six soldiers escaped from Germany—all of us bound together in the common hope of once more eluding the enemy on this last precarious stage of our journey to England.* We realised that our chances were not quite even inasmuch as five of the nine steamers of the line had already fallen victim to the Kaiser's war on the shipping of the world.

Aboard that craft was one woman, acting as table steward, her work thus releasing one more man to grapple—probably in a mine sweeper—with her country's enemies. She was leading a life that was rough, thrilling and perilous even for men, but she did not seem to mind it. She worked in a manner utterly unconscious of the danger she was running and the good she was doing. The way was hazardous, the indirect course taking forty hours instead of the fourteen of peace time. The little steamer, the plaything of an angry sea, would have been uncomfortable at any time, but now it must pick its course through waters infested with raiding destroyers from Ostend and Zeebrugge, with torpedoes and with mines. Truly, difficult work for a woman, but cheerfully performed withal.

Yet what we saw of her was only a fraction of the part she is playing in the war. We should never have learned the rest of the story had I not asked questions the second night which encouraged her to tell it. The

* "The Land of Deepening Shadow"—Chapter XXVII.

cabin table had been cleared, a table around which sat with me the three Tommies taken wounded in the Mons retreat, the young Belgian who had fought at Liège, another Belgian who, protecting himself with glass, had crawled through the electrified wire that marks the frontier of death between his country and Holland, and the French officer—later killed in Macedonia—who had tunnelled his way out of Torgua, swam the swift-flowing Elba and walked for twenty-nine days across Germany to Holland.

The woman, her work for the evening done, was standing just inside the door listening sympathetically to every word of the stories of the men when a youngster of thirteen, whom I had noticed doing such odd jobs as peeling potatoes, came in, took the woman by the hand and said: "Good-night, ma! I'm tired. I'm going to bed."

She kissed him and he went, and then we learned her story. Her husband, the captain of a little ship taken over by the Admiralty, had recently died leaving her with six children, the oldest of whom we had just seen. Faced by the necessity of doing something quickly to support them she eagerly accepted the trying and perilous work in which we found her engaged. But life at sea did not comprise all her dangers. She told of the Zeppelin incursions over Hull; of how, having everything their own way for a time in the absence of British anti-aircraft protection, they used to hover tantalisingly above the city while they rained down bombs with a deliberation that made the inhabitants long to get even. "I shall never forget," she said, "one night in particular when the stars were shining and the ground was lightly covered with snow. Those horrible monsters just seemed

to drift back and forth right above my house. My husband had just died; and I, with fear in my heart whenever a bomb made the house shake, sat with my children around me trying to comfort them. When there was silence for a time and the hope within me made me feel that they had gone, I would open the door—then my heart would sink, the night was so bright and those devils still above us. Because we were powerless against them they seemed to take fiendish glee in increasing our agony by making their bombs last as long as possible. But, thank God, times have sufficiently changed so that they now throw their bombs quickly and rush away."

Carrying on, without complaint, buoyed by a mother's love in her struggle to bring up six children, ashore beneath the death skies of the East Coast and aboard ship above the death waves of the North Sea she bravely did her part for country and for home—did it unseeking of sympathy for self but ever ready with cheer and sympathy for those about her.

But all beehives and all countries have their drones. What a contrast this woman of Yorkshire makes with the kind of woman who, disdainful of work since nursery days, is content while her country battles for its existence languidly to lie in bed in her comfortable Mayfair hotel until noon, her only display of energy being in sending down complaints to the management about the delay of breakfasts served in rooms and the "positively sickening lack of variety of the food."

Then there is the self-conscious petted young lady for whose pleasure the world moves around the sun every three hundred and sixty-five days, whose only noticeable economy is the saving of matches by lighting one cigarette from the last throughout the day. Of course

she is not idle. Fluffing up for luncheons, teas and dinners with "dear old things," which, translated, in her case means "officers of various grades in the uniform of the King" really does take a lot of time.

Indulgent mamma, of course, smiles her approval when daughter entertains the rest at the café table with pouting complaints over the absence of sugar and abuse of the proprietor and the Government because she is now limited to a choice of toast or cake. Daughter naturally feels that all with whom she comes in contact should feel honoured to be allowed to do something for her and should feel over-rewarded if she smiles or listens four minutes to what they are trying to tell her. War has its compensations for her, to be sure. Being chief of an army staff offsets, in a way, war's inferior bonbons and saccharine-sweetened tea. After all, daughter is not always to blame for her myopic perspective. I know of one woman trying to dissuade her daughter from doing war work. "How much pleasanter," she argued, "if you would hold your court in various West end tea rooms with charming officers, as does your sister."

This class of femininity, however, is almost negligible in Great Britain to-day. The way in which the overwhelming majority of British women are making every effort and sacrifice to win the war is one more disappointment to the war-willing Prussian leaders, who when making their plans counted upon dissensions among their enemies, not the least of which would be that caused by the militant suffragettes. Instead, when on one occasion there was labour trouble brewing in the shipyards along the Clyde, the women of Glasgow assured the Government that they would go to work if the

men downed tools, an assurance which had the desired effect.

Noteworthy has been the spirit of Britain's aristocracy to make sacrifices, both of life and treasure. I was particularly impressed with a certain Lady X, who seemed inexhaustible in her efforts to do everything possible for the wounded, but particularly for prisoners in Germany. Individual deserving cases got her special attention, and she worked as unobtrusively as possible. In the old ancestral hall she had twined the British naval ensign about a painting in a frame of oak, the likeness of a bright-eyed, honest-faced young midshipman, who had gone down fighting for home and mother. She always paused before this picture of her only son, and I saw her sweet face soften sweeter while she gazed lovingly on the boy in blue. One day as she turned away she said:

"How I loved him—and loving his memory is now the bright gem of my life. We must be brave; it is no use breaking down in sorrow. Hundreds of thousands of our best must die and millions mourn in silence if England is to live. I feel that the way in which I can do the most for the boy I have lost is to do as much as possible for those who are still fighting the fight for which he gave his life."

She does all she can, indeed. She did not tell me, but I know that when she runs below her ready funds she will quietly dispose of some rare book from her library or some of her jewels in order to help some poor Tommy in Germany or his needy mother back in Blighty.

While England was building up her army her homes did not suffer to the extent of those of France and

262 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Germany. In 1915, however, the death lists began to swell in the morning newspapers, and high and low the war has hit her murderously. By 1918 I found it almost impossible to go into a home in which the lightning had not struck. My innocent remark of the tactics at Neuve Chapelle, for example, would bring tenderness to the eyes and voice of the mother and father at table. Their boy perhaps had died on the barbed wire, unbroken by the shrapnel of those days. Names that used to mean villages in Flanders and Northern France but now mean merely points along a zig-zag line of shambles and death are to the mothers of England shrine names of sadness, sacrifice and glory. From France they are linked across the Channel with the vacant place at table and *his* room, a hallowed place no longer used—little things to be sure, but it is the little things that give to life its sweetness and endearing charm.

Some mothers seem to suffer less when they know with certainty that their sons are dead than when they lie awake nights wondering if the son reported missing may still be alive somewhere in Germany. While in England I got not hundreds, but thousands, of letters asking me if I believed that there were secret prison camps in Germany. The secret prison camp has been and continues to be one of sorrowing England's terrible hopes. I was particularly impressed with the great number of these letters which referred to the fighting at Loos during the September drive of 1915. In most of them the parent "knew for a fact" that James was only wounded because a comrade had written to that effect, but that the Germans had pressed them back and taken James prisoner. He had never written from

Germany, therefore he must be in some secret camp from which prisoners could not write. I hesitated to tell such a confiding parent that which I knew to be true from my last visit to Germany. I knew that the Germans, who had been accustomed to the initiative in offence, had blazed in anger and fury when a real offensive temporarily passed to the other side. I knew that this rage manifested itself on the part of German soldiers when they counter-attacked and that lightly-wounded James had been bayoneted to death. Some unknown common burying pit in France and not a secret prison camp beyond the Rhine is the whereabouts of the missing lad.

There is a political side to a mother's grief. One day I was introduced to a sweet-faced English mother in the Midlands, as a man who had seen both sides. "Tell me," she asked eagerly, "are we winning? That's all I want to know. You see," she continued, "I've lost three, and the youngest, the only one left, starts for France to-morrow." She turned away, then mastered her emotions. "It's terrible anyway, but it would be unbearable if I thought that we were not winning."

Why I say that this may be political is this: In early 1918 during the internecine political quarrel in England in which some papers sought to undermine Lloyd George by a series of venomous attacks upon his fitness for office, while other papers attacked the army chiefs, and the "Trust-the-Kaiser-Pacifists" attacked both, I clearly detected the back-fire on the British public, a public which had proved itself willing to sacrifice sons, brothers and fathers while believing that such sacrifices were necessary to win, but clearly developing a feeling of unwillingness once they had become convinced that

264 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

incompetent leadership was throwing life away. Then came Germany's mighty offensive, imperilling Britain in France but saving Britain at home. Constructive criticism in all countries is needful, but if carried to the cut-throat stage it may so undermine a nation's faith in its leadership that that nation caves in.

Before the war many English women, entranced, no doubt, by pretty uniforms and the German officers' professional skill in love-making, married them; but even so, most of them have not lost their love of country and sad indeed is the lot of those living in a land where everything English is villified, obliged to see their sons grow up in German uniform. I know of one case in the Fatherland where such a son, a mere cadet at school, used to talk so violently against everything English that his mother occasionally remonstrated. The fiery youth told her, in the presence of his German father, that never in that house was she to say one word in favour of England. Germany is a man's country—or, rather, a male's country—so the father naturally supported the son, with the consequence that the mother had to omit war talk, geography and history from topics of conversation. The German school has a greater influence than the mother upon the German youth and to a wonderful extent does it succeed in imbuing the young with a jingoistic patriotism which puts Kaiser and army above all else in the world.

Germany has even gone to the extent of capitalising the anguish of mothers. During the war the interest in spiritualism is spreading rapidly, which gives increased opportunity to the psychological jugglers who trick people with what they call spiritualism. One psychic bucket shop on Regent Street in London did

THE MOTHERS ACROSS THE SEA 265

a prosperous business until closed by the activities of the *Daily Mail*. One of the assistant mediums was an Austrian and the police search of papers disclosed the interesting information that all the questions which he asked grief-stricken mothers about the units to which their sons were attached and all possible military information had been carefully tabulated for transference to the Wilhelmstrasse.

I was standing one summer morning, shortly after America had entered the war, in a little one-street village by the railway leading eastward from Bordeaux. A bright-eyed French boy of seven was prattling to me, when I happened to notice a train of empties swinging back west around the bend. I could see chalk writing on the sides of the cars, which turned my thoughts to the early days when I saw the Austrian troop trains roll up to the Serbian front, festooned with flowers and greenery and chalked with, "Down with Serbia," and "Express Train to Belgrade." A little later I saw trains roll west in Germany inscribed with, "Express Train to Paris."

But those scenes had long ago faded in the grim reality of war. No European soldiers were any longer in this mood. Too many comrades had fallen, and the teeth had become too tightly set.

There could be only one explanation. After nearly three years in warring Europe I was thrilled with the thought that the boys from home must have ridden in that train. I was sure of it when I could make out "Berlin or Bust."

"What does it say?" the little French boy asked. I translated that beautiful bit of sentiment and then rendered for him the next epithet of "Down with the

Kaiser." At least, that is how I rendered it—for, after all, the child was only seven, and "down" expressed the direction quite as accurately as the more forcible phrase used by the troops.

"That means the Americans have surely come?" asked the child excitedly.

I assured him that it certainly did.

His eyes beamed. "I must run home and tell mamma," he cried. "Mamma teaches me to pray every night before I go to bed to ask God to send the Americans soon. Then France will be saved, and papa can come home."

There are mothers braving danger such as those of the Bukowina and the blockade runner of the North Sea, but most of them are far from the scenes of hostilities, mourning the lost or lonely for the absent or anxiously waiting from letter to letter. From the Black Sea to Land's End they suffer for the most part in silence, never quite free from fear when they know that their sons are in the danger zone or some time going to it. A mother is a mother the world over and there is no more steadfast or truer love than is hers for her son. It matters not whether she rocked him in a Balkan peasant hut while she busily plied her loom, or took him from the nurse amid tapestry and marble—she will in most cases centre her hope in him more and more with passing years. Mothers make the character of men, and home and mother are synonymous. Cafés, theatres and the social whirl have their uses, but it is homes, not these, that make a nation great. And it is mighty hard for a mother to watch her son grow to manhood and then see him hacked down by war on the threshold of life.

I used to admire Bismarck and I used to admire the

THE MOTHERS ACROSS THE SEA 267

German army as the greatest military machine in the world. Indeed, in 1911, during the Agadir crisis, when I was in Alsace-Lorraine, I caught some of the German military enthusiasm as they eagerly expected that the dogs of war would be cut loose on France, but in Belgium I began to realise the terrible responsibility on the head of a man or group of men deliberately beginning a war without having exhausted all effort to a peaceful solution.

For three and a half years I have heard the sobs and seen the tears of the mothers of Europe and I realise that to their grief is now mingled that of the mothers of my own country. Their cross of sorrow seems almost too difficult sometimes for one generation and if the war ends in such a way that they must transfer it to the mothers of the next all this misery and sacrifice will have been in vain.

Yet Baron von Freytag, after bloody years of war, voicing the sentiment of military Germany, says in reference to the next war:

"Our business is to maintain the fundamental ideas of war as they lived in the German army up to the year 1914, to soak them in the experiences of the present war, and to make the fullest technical use of these experiences."

CHAPTER XIII

THE DUG-OUTLESS FRONT

THERE are times when some side-question in the war comes up which I am able to settle to my own satisfaction only by a first-hand journey of investigation.

I recall that at a luncheon in London given by Lord Northcliffe in early 1915, a discussion arose concerning the correct native pronunciation of the Galician fortress city of Przemyśl, which was then besieged by the Russians. There being nobody immediately available to settle the dispute, I proposed that I should start in a day or two to learn the pronunciation first-hand. The others laughed. But his Lordship, never timid about taking chances, agreed to back me in the wager. So I started for Przemyśl.

In early 1918 I heard varied opinions among the Expeditionary Forces in Italy as to why the enemy had not bombarded Venice. His lines were only thirteen miles from the city, and Dunkirk was shelled at twenty. Some, regularly opposed to the Vatican, said it was due to the Pope's influence—which they cited as evidence of his connection with Austria. Others, regularly upholding the Vatican, also said it was the Pope's influence—which they cited to prove his interest in things Italian.

I went to Venice, presented myself to the Admiralty, and asked if I could go out in the lagoons to the positions nearest the enemy in order to see for myself the

methods employed in this out-of-the-way bit of front with its combination of land and water fighting.

An Italian naval officer, pointing to a military chart, explained: "That long, narrow strip of land separating the lagoon of Venice from the Adriatic and running northeast between the two main mouths of the Piave, is the enemy's direct road to Venice. Towards the extremity is a bridgehead, with the Austrians fan-like about it. The men defending this bridgehead are, to be sure, enfiladed, but for them to give way would result in the enemy securing positions on the island which would in turn enfilade the east of our line. His main purpose, of course, is to batter through the mountains between the Brenta and the Piave, and take our whole river line on the flank. In the meantime, however, we must prevent him from working down the lagoon, which would have the further result of Venice being within reach of his nine-inch guns and perhaps his six."

As the naval officer thus described the extreme east of the front, the booming of the guns never let us forget that Venice was within the shadow of actual war. While he was speaking with admiration of the sailors, acting as soldiers, holding that most advanced and important bridgehead, I remembered that the American Consul had mentioned to me earlier in the day that he had a large chest of tobacco and sweets for distribution—a remembrance which presented a plan to my mind. An idea had occurred to me when the naval officer said, "Within reach of the enemy's nine-inch guns, and perhaps his six." "What of his twelves, fourteens, and sixteens?" I thought.

Secondly, I had been growing increasingly interested in Italian psychological traits as affecting the war.

270 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Ancient Rome has long ago passed away. The modern Italian is young, not old. The mass of the people impressed me with their kindly spirit and their susceptibility to influence—which makes them easy dupes of any kind of propaganda,—their appreciation of interest shown in them, and their readiness to return favour for favour. I refer of course to the mass of the people, and not to the professional tourist-scavengers who infested the Amalfi drive and other beaten paths in peacetime.

I had found Consul Carroll at Venice among the best of the many excellent men of our consular service whom I have learned to know and respect. Some of them carried out their duties under most trying conditions in the Central Empires in a manner which merits the gratitude of our country. Mr. Carroll has earned a wide reputation in Northern Italy for his ever-helpful activity during the months when the fate of the nation swayed in the balance. I was not surprised, therefore, when he unhesitatingly accepted my proposal that we should try to make our way to the bridgehead and personally distribute cheering packages to its defenders.

I told him that members of the Italian Government had expressed to me the hope that America would see her way clear to send some troops to Italy for the stimulating effect that it would have upon the native soldiery. I remarked that this was a world of comparative values, and that it would be interesting for us to observe how we should be received among a picked body of troops who would realise that a couple of Americans had voluntarily risked their lives to go out to them because they believed in them.

The Admiralty agreed to my proposition and provided us with a swift naval launch.

Verice has always been a magnet for tourists, for whom it has a kind of Arabian Nights' fascination. I last had seen it in the early summer of 1914 while on my way to Austria. It had a charm all its own on a night of carnival, when the canals teemed with the shadowy outlines of gondolas of pleasure and romance, and the windows of the hotels and palaces along the Grand Canal blazed brightly, while across the sparkling waters were wafted notes of melody from floats festooned with myriads of lights, gliding gently with the stream.

Yet infinitely more magical did I find this dreamland when not music, but the roar of the guns, was borne upon the waters. All windows were heavily shuttered, partly that no ray might guide the raiders from the sky, and partly because this city of 150,000, plus tens of thousands of visitors, had now shrunk below 50,000, most of whom stayed at home in the evening to huddle over whatever little fire they could muster. To stroll alone through miles of silent empty streets and stygian passageways, along and across canals rippled only by the winter wind, with the flood of cold moonlight silvering into chiselled detail the bridges, marble columns, arches and delicate tracery of a deserted Fairyland, was to feel the sublimity of the architectural genius of an age when Eastern trade and beauty went hand in hand.

One morning, just as dawn was breaking, the Consul and I in our naval launch were cutting the waters of the Grand Canal. We could still look back at the Campanile, pencilled against the sky, when we passed under forts whose huge guns bellowed above our heads. A

272 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

little farther we threaded our way among rafts from which six-inch naval guns sent their shells hurtling over us so close that the rush of air seemed to pick up our craft and sweep it forward.

We left the launch at a point where the Austrian trenches curved down to the canal not far ahead. We were on the island between the Old Piave and the Piave, the last long strip leading to our bridgehead goal—a barren flat formed from the silt brought down from the river and the sands washed up by the sea. Along the uneven roads of this flimsy land, dotted with a few flimsy pinkish houses, Italian sailors were moving ammunition slowly forward on carts drawn by horses, mules, donkeys and oxen. We got the start of these, however, in a motor-transport which staggered along the road toward the shells bursting ahead.

We had entered the "dug-outless" front. Like a coral island it seems to float; for if you dig down in most places, you need turn only a few shovels to strike muddy water. Consequently, the Italians have to make most of their cover by filling sandbags and piling them up on the surface. The low ridge of dunes is the chief solid exception, and its possession by the enemy would prove a long-range bombardment menace to Venice. The Austrians on the mainland have firmer terrain, but not firm enough for the concrete foundations necessary for their heavy howitzers. In artillery duels the Italians, with their movable raft-batteries, have a decided advantage. That, and not the Vatican, or Austrian good intentions, is the secret of why the guns have not been trained on the Pearl of the Adriatic.

That the enemy want the island badly is constantly evidenced by the activity of their artillery, and the de-

termination of their attacks on the bridgehead. By an interesting coincidence they selected the morning of our coming for one of their heaviest artillery bombardments. With shells bursting behind and on both sides we jumped from the lorry, which we left in a clump of scraggy trees, and zigzagged on foot across a *papier-mâché* country where most of the sentries had nothing more substantial for shelter than windshields of woven straw. We were sorry to be forced to abandon for the time our chest full of tobacco and sweets.

We are now on the beach opposite the Cortellezo bridgehead, but cannot venture on the short, narrow path leading to the first line, as this is being potted with six- and nine-inch shells, while directly ahead the rows of houses between us and the enemy are toppling in clouds of smoke and dust.

A lull, and we take a chance on the shell-pocked path to the bridgehead. A whistle from the left and another from the right and we realise first-hand the hardships of troops holding the handle in a spread-out fan of enemy batteries. We reach with relief the mud and water pits of the first line, and crawl up to the most advanced machine-gun box, from which we peer out to where Austrian dead lie scattered under mulberry trees like leaves raked into heaps. The foremost lies on his face, with his outstretched hand still gripping the bomb that he had been about to throw.

I took note of the sailors about me. Like all those I saw that day, their spirit seemed equal to any in the world. Here and outside in the rear they were scratching and sandbagging themselves into a semblance of security, while beside us the machine-gunners were shav-

274 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

ing the nearest enemy trench with such a lively joy in their work that to watch them was invigorating.

The Consul explained that we had brought some comforts to them, which would be fetched from the dunes whenever the foe became a little quieter. The men showed us with pride the stores of bombs and ammunition captured the preceding night in a raid.

It was a pleasure to see their appreciative expressions when we told them that, as citizens of their great ally from over the sea, we were thrilled with their stubborn defence of this out-of-the-way front. We spoke of how all the world loved Venice and would feel ever grateful to them for blocking the foe's attempt to reach it. I told of how I was thrilled in Rome a few weeks before, when the citizens poured into the streets, despite the gloom cast by the terrible retreat, to sing and cheer America's declaration of war against Austria-Hungary, the official act which ranged us at Italy's side.

The little group in the advanced pillbox, like all the men with whom we had talked that day, seemed anxious to show the measure of their appreciation of our coming. One of them handed the sturdy Consul the helmet just taken from a prisoner, whereupon I peeked out through the machine-gun slit and jokingly remarked that I would crawl around into the orchard and get the one off the dead man lying just outside—a feat which I considered impossible in daylight and one upon which I had not the slightest intention of embarking.

After we squirmed back to the first trench we made our way into a well-propped dug-out which had weathered the storm of the shelled house that had crashed down upon it a few hours earlier. We were sipping

coffee in this comparative security, when a tall, handsome, olive-skinned lad from the South, entered with his captain. He had been standing near me and understood my remark about the headgear, whereupon he had obtained permission to risk his life by wriggling out for it. His dark eyes danced with pleasure as he handed me the helmet from the orchard of death.

I regretted deeply that he had thus risked his life, but later I viewed his act in a larger light. I realised the terrible crash at Caporetto had not sapped the spirit of such a man, and I felt, too, that there was not a "quitter" at the bridgehead or in the shell-swept flats behind.

I had been up and down the whole of the Italian battle-front. I had seen the people before, during and after the retreat, and I had seen politicians in Parliament halt in time on the road to national ruin, when Perolini, the Republican deputy, and Federozoni, the National deputy, appealed to all parties to lay aside their quarrels for the rest of the war. They succeeded in forming a new party of 150 deputies to be known as the "Group of National Defence," pledged to no politics but the winning of the war. I realised that a new Italian spirit had grown out of the great retreat, and I left the country with the firm conviction that the Italian army was absolutely sound.

The stimulus which American troops would exert upon it, however, is of tremendous importance, and one that we can not afford to overlook. Aside from our loyalty to our ally, there are two important reasons why our whole war effort would receive a serious setback through a defeat in Italy. In the first place, the forces

276 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

of the Central Powers would occupy the fertile valley of the Po, from which they would draw food. They would also secure some of the best skilled labour in the world from Milan and other Italian cities.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FRIGHTFULNESS MOON

I WAS talking one day in 1916 in Berlin with an American diplomat whose duties brought him to many capitals, when he took cards from his pocket, handed them to me and said, "Those two invitations concretely represent the dominant ones and the dominant differences of the England and the Germany of to-day."

The first, an invitation to the monthly American Club luncheon in Berlin, had as a postscript, "Bring your own meat and bread ticket." The second, an invitation to a Savoy party in London, said, "There will be a full moon that night." So changing, however, is the war that in 1918 the comparison no longer holds. It continues to be necessary, to be sure, for the German and his food tickets to be inseparable companions, but the same is true of the Englishman. As for the moon, the announcement above would be the worst possible advertisement to lure the Londoner to evening revelry.

Air raids on England—a definite part of German war policy—have gone through two acts and are now in the third. The first of these, the Zeppelin act, began April 14, 1915, and may be said to have come to an end late in November of the following year. Germany had things pretty much her own way for more than a year over England. Then the tide turned, and rapidly. Of

278 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

the thirteen targets which the Germans offered on the night of Sept. 2, 1916, Lieutenant Leefe Robinson knocked down one at Cuttley, near London. Three weeks later the Germans sent twelve and lost two.

This did not make pleasant reading in a land whose people had been educated to believe that the Zeppelin could win the war.

In the announcement of the loss of the three airships I witnessed in Germany yet another example of how the Government ladles out news to the lamb-like populace. There was no German official statement of the loss, which was broken to the people in a much more artful manner. On each occasion a paragraph reporting the loss was "lifted" in Holland by the Wolff Telegraph Bureau from the London *Daily Mail* and circulated in the German press. Thus the Government could not be accused of withholding the loss, while at the same time this manner of breaking the news was at least gentle, inasmuch as the German people have been taught that the *Daily Mail* always lies.

A few days later, on Oct. 1, the British knocked down another, and in the next raid, Nov. 27, they brought down two more. Not long before Count Zeppelin had boasted that the "Zeppelin season" would soon begin. It certainly did in England, using the expression as it is used of grouse. Defence had clearly overtaken offence and "unser wunderbarer Zeppelin" had ceased to be a real factor as a raider.

For the sake of appearances the German admiralty made a few spasmodic attempts upon the English coast during 1917, but they resulted in little damage, as the raiders turned back at the first warning of danger. On October 19, however, a flock of Zeppelins drifted over

the coast with engines stopped, then picked up and one of them succeeded in drifting across London and dropping bombs, one of which wrecked a principal square. But the Zeppelins had flown so high that when a gale arose they had become unmanageable and at daybreak were manœuvring over France, where five of them were destroyed. The tremendous loss almost caused the Zeppelins to be forgotten until they made two raids on successive nights on England's east coast in March, 1918.

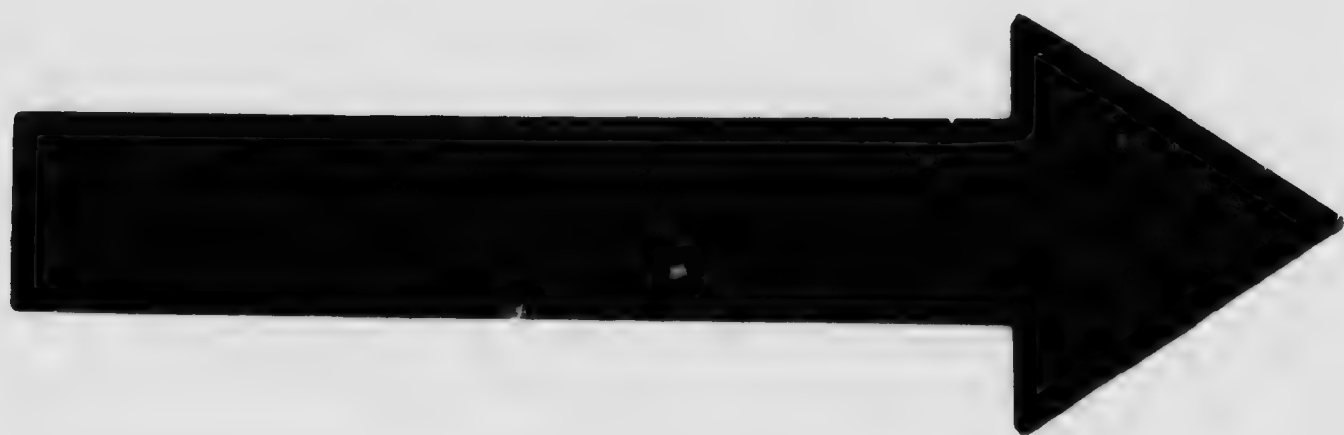
Thus the Zeppelin, which the Germans of all classes assured me would bring England to her knees, had killed in London 175 people, whereas during the same period 954 were killed in ordinary street accidents.

Its real function is scouting for the fleet, not bombing, and that extremely important function it continues to perform.

The English had little time, however, to bask in safety from air raids. There have been spasmodic aeroplane raids on England throughout the war, but on May 25, 1917, the curtain rose on the second act of the thrilling melodrama, "Raiding England."

In the late afternoon of that day 16 aeroplanes swept over Folkestone, knocked most of the main street to pieces, killed 75 and injured 174. On June 5, 18 aeroplanes made a daylight raid on the Thames valley, and then on June 13, in the full brightness of the morning, a raiding squadron cruised over London. I watched it from the roof of a Mayfair hotel, and so high were the raiders that I could see nothing but the silvery sheen of their machines as they caught the glint of the bright June sunshine. This raid caused the heaviest losses of any in London, 160 being killed and 429 injured.

By way of variation, the Germans tried Harwich on



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



4.5

5.0

5.6

6.3

7.1

8.0

9.0

10

11.2

12.5



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5989 - Fax

280 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

July 4, where they killed 11 and injured 36, and then on the 7th switched back to London. With an audacity that evoked our admiration, 22 German aeroplanes flew over the city that Saturday morning at such low altitude that the natives looked up and admired them, believing them to be British. Considering the number of people in the streets, it seems miraculous that only 60 were killed and 192 injured. During the rest of July and August daylight air raids on English coastal towns continued, but once again defence overtook offence, and the increase of British air squadrons at home brought the second act of the big air drama to a close.

On the night of Sept. 4, I was in a railway train bound from the South coast to Waterloo Station, London. The long-standing order that all train blinds and shades be drawn after sunset had recently been cancelled, inasmuch as the air-raid alarm system had been well developed and the lights could be extinguished by a central control. On this occasion they were extinguished at Surbiton, twelve miles from London, and we ran slowly toward the great darkened goal of the raiders across a country silvered by the moon. Ahead the guns began to bark and the shrapnel fragments were thudding about us as we crawled into the black, deserted station. The buzz of propellers overhead followed by two heavy crashes across the river in the direction of Charing Cross, crashes of duller and deeper note than the barking of guns, proclaimed that the British capital was facing a new proposition. The curtain was being rung up on Act III, an act played in moonlight, the most dramatic and terrible act of all.

We are still in this act and likely to be until the end of the war. After a couple of dress rehearsals in April,

THE FRIGHTFULNESS MOON 281

1917, the German managers made it part of their regular programme when they sent one machine over moonlit Kent on Sept. 2. Incidentally this happens to be Germany's great holiday of Sedan. On the following night half a dozen aeroplanes flew over Sheerness and Chatham, where they succeeded in killing 109 and injuring 92. The show was staged at London on the following night, from which date advertising matter containing the bait of "moonlight night" was scrapped.

At the next moon the Germans were busy as hornets, and six nights out of eight they buzzed above the city. "But," you may ask, "is not the damage done comparatively slight? Is it of any military value?" Let us examine this whole question fairly, for it is an important factor in the war.

In the first place up to April, 1918, air raids on London have resulted in death to 530 and injuries to 1,716. In other words, the people of London have suffered casualties totalling three one-hundredths of 1 per cent. If living at the front were as safe as this the war would be a picnic. As for property damage, London is big and the visitor would need a guide to show him the places hit.

Nevertheless, were I to dismiss raids on London with the above statistics and remarks I should be utterly misleading. In the first place, consider the amount of war material tied up in England in the nature of defence against hostile aircraft. In order to stop daylight raids it was actually necessary to bring planes back from France, where they are sorely needed along the lines of battle. Thus half a dozen enemy planes can tie up more than 100 British planes, inasmuch as the latter must be divided into groups to cover a number

282 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

of localities in order not to be surprised anywhere. Furthermore anti-aircraft guns with their ammunition supplies and the crews to man them are planted through eastern and southeastern England. On the periphery of London, indeed, the guns are almost as thick as at the front.

There is only one way to deal successfully with moonlight raids and that is not to aim directly at the raiders but to throw up a barrage ahead of them through which they cannot pass. Think of the enormous expenditure of ammunition required to maintain a curtain of bursting shrapnel hundreds of yards wide around the biggest city area in the world. A solitary German Gotha reaching the outer defences of London in the moonlight can cause an expenditure of ammunition that would make some of the great battles of other wars sound like skirmishes. Early in 1918 London had developed such a barrage. Daring raiders can occasionally jump the shrapnel screen, to be sure, for a dash across the city, but the contest is much more even than when the Germans had everything their own way.

So much for the material side of the matter. Now for the human. Again I remind my American readers that warring Europe after four years of Titanic conflict is a world apart from that which still is ours. Geographically we are outside the acuteness of the struggle. Both sides in Europe stagger under the battering and the question resolves itself upon endurance. The Germans work with method. To tie up material is important, but their intention is to do more than that. Moonlight carnivals of frightfulness are a definite and deliberate part of their plan to break down English and French morale.

You have probably read that bomb-dropping on English towns does not disturb in the least the equanimity of the cool, collected Englishman, except that in some cases it has aroused him to a more determined effort against the enemy. Far be it from me to accuse the English of panic during air raids, for such an accusation would be absolutely untrue. On the other hand, ice water is not a substitute for red blood in the veins of the Englishman to an extent popularly supposed. Feelings and emotions he has in abundance, but he has less of them bubbling on the surface than many other peoples.

Early in the war, when the continent seemed a place remote from his insular security, the Germans lent a hand to the recruiting sergeants by sending over the Zeppelin, but the war has long since been brought home to England, with the result that air-raids are no longer needed as a stimulant to a realisation of its realities.

The Englishman is not such a cold-blooded personage that he is indifferent to being turned into a mass of jelly by a bomb, or to having his skull battered in by a jagged lump of shrapnel descending with terrific velocity from a height of two or three miles. With a barrage so extensive as that of London it is obvious that the deluge of death from British shell fragments makes taking cover imperative. There is no more bravery in remaining unnecessarily out of doors during a raid than there is in a soldier pushing his head over the parapet through curiosity. The world's sternest teacher has long ago painfully eliminated both practices. Now, when the warning is sounded in the British capital the effect is not unlike that of a gun fired among jack-rabbits, which sends them scurrying to their holes.

284 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

This brings us to another phase of the raid situation. One bright blue day the "take cover" signal boomed over London, causing the business of the world's biggest metropolis to come promptly to a standstill. Workers of all descriptions took refuge in lower stories and basements. Shipping and freight consignments no longer moved, with the result that goods missed trains, with a consequent dislocation of programme on the other end.

As a war correspondent just returned from the Continent I felt it my journalistic duty to remain in the street to study the situation. I walked along Fleet Street and the Strand, uncanny now, for the throbbing heart of London had ceased to beat. A few moments ago these famous arteries of life were teeming with traffic and streams of men and women. With the first alarm the buses tore along like racing machines until a tube station was reached, where driver, conductor and passengers descended to safety. I saw lines of empty buses on silent, empty streets, whose life was the occasional belated pedestrian hurrying to reach some friendly shelter ere the breaking of the storm. I turned down to the Embankment, where the open stretch along the Thames afforded a longer sky-line; there I gazed to the east, but nothing came out of the blue and filmy distance. After more than an hour the magic wand of "All Clear" breathed life once more into London streets.

What happened? A German raiding squadron had crossed the high chalk cliffs of the Kentish coast headed up the valley of the Thames. London got the warning, but in the meantime British aircraft had turned back the invaders. *Now, because there were no casualties*

in London and no buildings wrecked is it accurate to say that there was no damage done? What about 2,000,000 workers knocking off work for an hour? This war is one of men and machinery at the front and the organisation of whole nations behind the front, consequently in such a war a loss of 2,000,000 hours, a considerable percentage of which should be devoted to war work, cannot be left off the debit side of the ledger.

And daylight raids are child's play compared with those of the moon. During one period of activity in the autumn of 1917 many of the munition works near London closed down for five nights. Can this be left out of consideration in the rush of both sides to heap up a superiority of material?

Furthermore, what of the wear and tear on the community? Although the chance of any given building being hit in London is infinitesimal, you want bigger odds when you are gambling with death than when you are playing poker or bridge or investing in lottery tickets. Most citizens of London have seen plenty of first-hand evidence of the destructive power of a bomb. In one of the moonlight raids in the autumn of 1917, for example, a bomb dropped in the Bloomsbury district. Next morning the passers-by saw a great hole before a well-known hotel, the front of which was bashed in. Two granite columns, a foot square, were snapped off like pipe stems. There was blood on the sidewalk and blood inside the door, for three people had been killed outside and four inside. For a hundred yards up the street and a hundred yards down the street every window was shattered.

The morning following a raid in late January, 1918, Londoners in the vicinity of Covent Garden saw some

40 mutilated bodies being taken out of a basement. The place had been marked, "Shelter During Raid," and had proved but a death trap. Such sights quicken the imagination and make people dread the chance that what happens to others may happen to them. Thus the Englishman, having seen what bombs could do, takes them more and more seriously. There is an exodus from the city with the growing of the moon, an exodus so great that all accommodations in neighbouring villages and towns are eagerly snapped up. The Government has commandeered so many hotels in London that the remainder are congested most of the time, but during the period of moonlight there are plenty of rooms to be had.

Most of the people, however, cannot leave London. They make up their minds to bear it and do so admirably. Outside the entrance of the tubes women stand hour after hour, in many cases with babies in their arms, ready to descend to safety should the alarm sound. A mother who stays most of the night in a tube or a town hall basement watching over her children, and then takes her place at dawn in a food line in order to be one of the first to be served, is up against the realities of war to an extent undreamed of by her American sister. Furthermore, even though John Smith may suffer no fear, the fact that he is kept awake by the guns several nights at a stretch in time impairs the maximum efficiency of his day's work. Germany knows all these things, hence her persistence in attacking great nerve centres such as London and Paris.

For obvious geographical reasons the Allies cannot harass civilian Germany with any given effort as can the Germans harass them. Nevertheless, I have seen

an abundance of evidence that the only way in which the Allied Governments can maintain the morale of their raided populations is for the people to feel that adequate measures of defence are being taken and that the enemy is being paid back in his own coin. All of which means that the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy cannot for a moment relax their efforts to secure the mastery of the air.

During Verdun and the Somme Germany was outclassed in the air and smarted under inferiority. The German airmen were content to stay behind their own lines, while the French and British dashed over them to observe, photograph, drop bombs and give battle. Many a time did I hear the German officers in a "sour grapes" tone of voice say "*Die Franzosen sind frech.*" ("The French are impudent.")

But the German leaders are a commendably determined set of men, and they resolved to increase their output to the utmost limit. Even in the fourth year of the war they were advertising in the newspapers for waste land near big cities suitable for aviation training grounds. Gradually they caught up again at the front and have then forged ahead; indeed, my own front experiences convinced me that in early 1918 they came over the Allies' lines at least as much as we went over theirs. Observation balloons are anchored a comfortable distance to the rear and they are knocking down plenty of these. One day at Verdun, while crouching in a shell-hole on the right bank of the Meuse, I forgot the lively artillery duel for the moment in watching a German airman dart from his group, swing over my position and make straight for a big "sausage" anchored a considerable distance away. As

288 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

he flashed above it a tongue of flame leapt from the balloon, followed by a huge mass of fire floating slowly in the sky. Down from the drifting furnace a streak shot toward the earth. Then a parachute opened and the daring and quickwitted observer could go up some other day.

Nowhere have I seen the human side of air raids enacted more graphically than in Italy. One day in late December, 1917, after the Italians had turned successfully at bay on the Piave a squadron of enemy battleplanes essayed the grey afternoon light for a long detour over the Italian lines towards Treviso. Italian and British airmen rose to give them battle and after the smoke had cleared away eleven of the visitors' planes lay wrecks on the ground. I witnessed a dramatic incident during this fight, when a German plane descended in flames. When it touched the ground the wounded aviator stepped from it with his clothing on fire and would have burned to death had not a couple of Italian soldiers rushed up and wrapped their coats about him.

Apparently the enemy resolved to get even for this 11 to 0 defeat, for he immediately selected the cities of northern Italy for some of the most violent bombing of the war, the time-mellowed city of Padua being picked as the chief target to be strafed.

For six nights out of eight his machines came over, staying an hour on each of the first two nights and six hours on subsequent nights, all the time raining down bombs with impunity.

The second night I was at the telegraph office filing a dispatch to London describing the raid of the first night, on which occasion the enemy deliberately hov-

ered over the residential and café centre of the city in order to spread terror. I had been at the railway station, a legitimate object, but not a bomb fell near it. On the second night, just after I had handed in my telegram, the lights suddenly went out—something which causes a feeling akin to approaching seasickness to the initiated—then a scream from the warning siren, and the first bomb struck outside of the city.

For an hour Padua shook, and when there was silence for a few moments I sauntered out into what seemed at first to be the most wonderful moonlight that I had ever seen, but which I soon realised was caused by the seething furnace of the burning dome of the Carmini church. It is interesting to note that this church was built in 1250 to commemorate the termination of the cruel Hohenstaufen rule from the north, and that now, after all these centuries, raiders from the same north had come and gone in the night, leaving this beacon to mark their ruthlessness.

As I approached the church I heard the shrieks of frenzied women whose homes had been destroyed by other bombs which had fallen in the neighbourhood. One of these, stark mad, picked up the family dog following at her heels and held it against her eyes to shut out the sight of her ruined home. Her madness seemed the more terrible because of the weird, fantastic scene. Padua is a pearl of the centuries of long ago and the light of this old, historic church, turning the canals and the old arcaded buildings rising from them into a splendour of magic sunset light, produced an effect unlike anything that I have ever seen. I wondered what I could do to comfort the woman, when an Italian airman limped by me and went up to her. As he put his arms

290 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

about her neck I turned away—for the mad woman was that fellow's mother.

I moved on to where a building just opposite the church had been hit so that the back had crumbled in completely, while the front seemed ready to fall if a good-sized splinter were pulled out from one of the prop beams. Beneath the wreckage a man was pinned, face downward, the weight on his legs and spine. The agony which he suffered almost drove him mad and his shrieks cut me like saws and knives. A fireman was about to attempt to crawl through to him with a glass of water, when a priest came across from the church, took the glass of water, explained that he was going to crawl through to give the last rites to the doomed man, and turned majestically with a motion for the few onlookers to step back, which we did, until the sparks from the crackling dome fell upon us. We watched the priest crawl amid the wreckage until he could extend the water to the lips of the sufferer, then we saw him hold up a crucifix. We saw no more. There was a grinding crash, the building toppled and became the tomb of the priest and the man for whom he had risked his life.

On the next night the moon, relentlessly beautiful, again rose dazzling bright and flooded the landscape with glittering silver. Padua, a compact speck compared with London, girdled with a mirror of canals, awaited the bombardment of the third successive night. No tubes, as in London, no deep cellar refuges, no wide area to magnify the chances of not being hit. For three days the civil population had been streaming southward, but it would be many days before all could go. Eight o'clock struck and the waiter in the almost deserted res-

restaurant rubbed his hands uneasily, as my war correspondent companion and I tarried over the final course. There is a peculiar feeling in the war zone that where you are not is always a safer place than where you happen to be. Thus did the waiter continue the nervous rubbing of his hands.

I crossed the deserted street to war correspondents' headquarters, where five of us could sit out the raid, while we affected a nonchalant air, which, to be honest, I didn't feel, and I don't think the rest did. No doubt we should discuss, as on previous occasions, such irrelevant subjects as the histrionic abilities of Sarah Bernhardt. I looked up at the moon and hated it, the same old moon which at other times and in other climes would inspire and make life more beautiful. But here it was the moon of death.

The chimes of nine had mellowed and gone. Then a hush, as all lights died at the touch of a central control. The blood-curdling siren shrieks, and the first heavy bomb rocks the ancient city. An hour of concentrated hell, then a lull, and the people flock unbidden from their homes. Blanched women, tottering old men, they form a great procession, which moves solemnly through the arcaded streets to the mighty basilica of St. Anthony, where in a shrine repose the bones of Padua's patron saint.

With bowed, uncovered heads they stand, a huge, black mass, crowding the square before the Santo, their eyes aglow in the light of the moon and the light of the tongues of flame darting up into the night. A streak across the moon, another blood-curdling shriek from the siren and the supplicants scatter. Then a blinding flash and a thousand clanging foundries crash together in the

292 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

hastily deserted square. A 200-pound bomb whistles through the air. The Basilica is sprayed and pierced with flying metal. But the people of Padua have not lost their faith, for they comfortingly explain that though the Basilica was hit and partly ruined, a miracle preserved the shrine of St. Anthony itself intact.

The cathedral was struck the same night and the whole huge front crashed into the square; in fact, Padua's treasures of ancient buildings, monuments and art during that awe-inspiring week beneath the January moon were rapidly becoming memories instead of links with mighty centuries that have forever rolled away.

I was particularly impressed one morning upon turning a corner in the Santa Lucia district, after six hours of bombing on the fifth night, to come upon a ruined house with a bit of the back wall standing, containing a stone with the following inscription:

"LET THE CENTURIES RESPECT
THIS EDIFICE OF
EZZELINO BALBO
ERECTED 1160."

The centuries had, but the Germans had not. I say Germans because it was they in their Gothas who have been making the moonlight incursions of death above the cities of northern Italy. It is worthy of note that the Vatican protested against the bombing of Padua's treasures. The Austrians did not come, but the Germans, though they were moving their star line-cracking storm battalions from the Italian front to northern France, left their bombing planes behind to carry on

the campaign of spreading terror and breaking Italian morale.

I have found an impression in America that the enemy have generously spared Venice. I am inclined to thank the constructions of the city, with its multitude of canals, that not greater damage has been done, than thank the enemy for generous motives. Fifty-three air raids on Venice from the beginning of the war until late August, 1918, hardly stand as evidence of enemy intentions to spare the Adriatic's brightest gem. On February 26th, for example, 300 bombs fell upon the city. Thirty-eight houses were smashed, the Royal Palace was struck, one wing of a home for old men and women was blown to pieces and three churches were damaged—those of St. John and St. Paul, St. Simon the Less and St. John Chrysostom, in which an altar with one of Cellini's last landscapes was wrecked. It takes only twenty-five minutes for a squadron raiding Venice to return behind the Austrian lines, load up with bombs and come back to the work of destruction.

Venice will wear through the coming centuries the scars of this. In an earlier raid the Scalzi Church on the Grand Canal was destroyed, with its gorgeous frescoed roof by Tietolo; a white stone five yards from the doors of St. Mark's records the place where another bomb just failed to smash to fragments these golden Byzantine mosaics, which cannot be carried off to a place of safety. During one raid fifteen bombs fell near the Doges Palace, all of them, fortunately, into the water of the lagoon a few yards from the edge of the Riva del Schiavoni. One missed by very little the Bridge of Sighs. Ten bombs fell around the Rialto Bridge on both sides of the Grand Canal. It is interesting to note

294 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

that the street named by odd historical coincidence the Calle de Tedeschi, or "Passage of the Germans," was heavily damaged.

Whether in northern Italy or in Paris or London, the intention of the German is the same. He designs his air raids partly to tie up men, guns and shells, but in this psychological stage of a nerve-breaking war which has now dragged almost to the length of our civil war, his chief design is to batter down the morale of our allies. It is worthy of mention that in his efforts to increase his airplane output he has scrapped the shrine of the great god Zeppelin at Friedrichshafen on Lake Constance and converted it into airplane manufacture.

Nothing but the combined efforts of the Allies, with the full utilisation of the manufacturing possibilities of the United States and its great reservoir of some of the finest aviator material in the world, can overcome this tremendously important arm of the Kaiser's gigantic military machine. Indeed, by the spring of 1919 the air initiative will almost certainly have definitely and overwhelmingly passed to the Allies.

CHAPTER XV

THOU SHALT KILL

I was in Sabac with the Austro-Hungarian forces in the opening campaign of the world-war. Personal inclination, or a magazine editor, or fate, or something had dropped me into Austria on the eve of the struggle. I was seeking the out-of-the-way places among Bosnians, Magyars and Gipsies in a lone journey of adventure and investigation. I saw the war-clouds loom up on the frontier of Serbia, and I turned into them rather than away from them. I had credentials which enabled me to exist among the forces of Francis Joseph for a time. The war was in its infancy, and officialdom had not yet properly regulated war correspondents.

I was in the shambles of an overgrown village. The blood of both armies, mingled together, still clotted the dust in the streets, and the wine from broken casks and bottles flowed in the cellars, soldiers wading in it up to their knees.

I turned a corner into a byway, deserted save for an *unter-offizier* just ahead of me. An old woman, bent and shrivelled, tottered from a whitewashed mixture of mud and thatch, saw the enemy soldier, hesitated and started back, then changed her mind, turned, and sinking to her knees extended her arms for mercy.

The *unter-offizier* drew his sabre—still a relic of war—and swaggered up to her.

296 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

A picture of misery, she knelt before him in the white dust, her eyes wide open in terror, her white locks escaping the yellow sash around her head, her bony arms pleadingly held out for mercy.

I was filled with resentment that the creature in uniform, with his apparently perverted sense of humour, should seek to frighten her. "A little tenth-rate stage play and magnanimous pardon," I thought. I was mistaken. The sabre whistled and slashed the outstretched arms, and the wild death shriek of the woman cut me like saws and knives, as I turned away bewildered.

I came face to face with the man a few minutes later. He was not drunk. Nor did he look like a wildman from the hills. He was Viennese, the kind of man that I had seen on scores of occasions, lolling in a café, mild and gentle as a kitten. He looked mild and gentle now.

There is a cause for everything in this world. Sometimes it is obscure, but it exists, none-the-less. The majority of people simply accept incidents and events as isolated actions. There are others, however, who look deeper. To them the mere fact that something has happened, is not so important as *why* it has happened. In this mood I approached the licensed murderer, explained my status, told him that I knew his country, and had liked its charms, which made me the more disappointed that he had acted as he did.

"It was entirely unnecessary," I said. "Why did you do it?"

"She was a pig-dog Serb," he replied, "an enemy of my country. The Serbians have been trying to cause trouble in my country. They have brought about this war. I have seen many of my comrades killed. Perhaps that woman was the mother of some dog that killed

some of them. If the Serbs are all wiped out, they will make no more trouble. So you see I did my duty."

And he uttered this conclusion in a manner that showed him satisfied in his conscience that he had done what was right.

Three months later I visited the American hospital in Munich, a hospital for German wounded run on funds collected in the United States. In one of the rooms I talked with three convalescents, all of them getting on well enough to be on their feet. In those days I was still making up my mind from a first-hand comparison of both sides as to the merits of the war. I chatted pleasantly with the three men, particularly with one of them—a short, stocky chap, who was of a much more talkative nature than his companions. I was actually saying to myself that surely this fellow could be guilty of no atrocities. He seemed so good natured. But a story which he insisted on telling, despite the efforts of the nurse to hurry me along, caused me to alter my opinion.

"We Germans stand no nonsense, Herr Korrespondent," he began. "I will tell you something to let you know that we mean business. It was so funny. In the early days I was with our company on the march in the Vosges Mountains when we came to a wood at noon. While we were casting about to eat our mid-day meal, we came upon a French priest concealed in the bushes. Our officers quickly decided that he was a spy and to please us men after we had eaten, they turned him over to us and told us to dispose of him as we saw fit."

The man's eyes glowed with the memories called up by the story. "We tied a rope around his neck," he

298 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

continued, "and threw it over the limb of a tree. This done, some of the boys pulled on the rope, and the priest's feet left the ground. Then one of my comrades rushed up and thrust his bayonet into the priest's stomach, crying, 'So die all enemies of the Fatherland!' The rest of us being near, also began to jab him with our bayonets while he went higher and higher as the others pulled on the rope. Then we had a jumping contest as we cried, 'Higher! Higher!' to see which one of us could be the last to stick our bayonet into the priest."

I make different deductions from these two stories. The one of the priest shows sheer brutality in the narrator and those of his companions who acted and thought as he did. It furthermore reflects unfavourably upon the officers who condoned it, even though they did not order it. Apparently they knew their men sufficiently well to be aware of just what sort of post-prandial amusement would delight them most.

Hacking the old woman in Sabac contained a germ of difference. In it, I realised later, I had witnessed my first war-time example of the fruits of German education. *The code is that anything done in the name of the Fatherland is correct.* A man can be educated in a certain way so that he will wipe out "crawling verminous pests of his country" with as little compunction as a farmer would rid his field of potato bugs.

I have seen enough of this phase of war-psychology to fill volumes. It finds its greatest expression in the scientifically fostered hatred of the Germans for the English. Early in the war, I once asked a German school girl if she thought it would be right for a Zeppelin to go over London and kill women and children.

She opened her eyes in amazement that I should put such an absurd question. "Why not?" she exclaimed. "Anything is right against the English." And she looked perfectly sweet when she said it.

At the end of the first week of October, 1914, while crossing Germany, I had a wait of an hour at the busy railroad junction of Löhne. Antwerp was likely to fall any day, the war was young, and the passengers waiting on the platform for various trains, talked of nothing but German victories, past and future.

A train rolled in from the direction of Cologne, and when those on the platform saw the car windows filled with British prisoners, most of whom appeared to be wounded, they clustered around it like flies. An ugly feeling quickly developed at sight of the English, while abuse flew thick and fast from wildly-gesticulating civilians who were permitted to go right up to the windows.

A German *unter-offizier* who formed one of the guard aboard the train came out, and, standing conspicuously upon the car steps, cried, "Do you know what kind of enemies we are fighting? Well, I will show you. This is what they use against brave German soldiers in order to tear and mutilate their bodies. Do you see these?"

He held up a clip of cartridges whose steel noses had been cut off so as to expose the lead beneath. "These are dum-dum bullets!" he cried.

It was natural that the onlookers should be enraged at sight of bullets which would leave a German soldier

"With a big blue mark on his forehead,
And the back blown out of his head."

300 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

The platform became an uproar. Some struck with their canes at the Tommies standing in the windows. Unable to reach the prisoners from the outside, one man, brandishing his stick, rushed into the train, while the *unter-offizier* stepped deferentially aside. He was followed by another, and then another. I could see men and women spitting on the prisoners until some of these were leaning out of the windows again, because of the pressure in the corridors within.

In the excitement I talked hastily with two of these, but was interrupted when the engine whistled to go ahead, and the train was cleared to pull out through a jeering crowd. The spectacle of seeing prisoners beaten—particularly wounded men—had not been edifying, but in the beginning I partly excused the Germans on the ground that they had great provocation in the visible evidence of the dum-dum bullets.

In my brief conversation with the two Tommies, however, I had learned a detail of which the crowd was ignorant. This little detail was that the exhibitor of the dum-dums had taken clips of perfectly good cartridges from the prisoners and had the audacity deliberately to mutilate them before their very eyes. They hoped that the journey would soon be over inasmuch as the *unter-offizier* performed the same act every time the train stopped.

What I had witnessed was undoubtedly a voluntary piece of work in the hate campaign against England. The idea probably originated with the *unter-offizier* and not with the German Government. That the latter was not likely to object, however, is evidenced by the fact that the usual stringent platform regulations were suspended, while the higher officers in charge

of the train did nothing to keep the crowd under control. Discipline is so rigid in the German army that the *unter-offizier* would not have dared take a chance without the support of his superiors.

Some of my readers may remember the surfeit of spy stories and execution stories of the first month of the war. There were so many exaggerations that later when spy executions became only occasional events, most people began to feel that all the stories were myths. This is not true. The spy-wave of the first few weeks in the Central Powers is a definite link in the German chain of war-making.

Four years ago I wrote of how I was taken out in the moonlight in the Hungarian mountains behind Brasso by a band of Szeckler peasants who had decided to shoot me as a Serbian spy. For a long time I simply attributed their attempt to an over-zealous and terrified mood, but with the passing of months and years, I discovered in Germany that the affair was far more than a mere isolated personal experience.

In the first four weeks of the war, something over four hundred Germans and a considerable number of Austro-Hungarians were shot as spies by mistake. The shootings, let me add, were not official—although this is cold comfort to the shootees.

One day in Bremen, for example, an excited patriot pointed to a workman repairing the wiring on a high roof opposite the *Rathaus*. "Look!" he exclaimed, "he is sending wireless messages to Russia." The overwhelming desire to do something for his beloved Fatherland impelled him to fetch his rifle, with which he took deliberate aim and dropped the workman to the street. When he later explained to the police that he

302 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

thought he was shooting a dangerous spy he was dismissed.

Automobilists in the rural regions led a particularly perilous life. Among the many rumours agitating the Teuton mind was the widely-credited yarn that France was sending gold to Russia in automobiles through Germany. That the German people believed this absurdity furnishes us with some criterion of their state of mind. Numbers of farmers, most of whom were members of shooting *Vereins*, used to sit at crossroads, rifle in hand, to challenge automobilists. Indeed, in a great number of cases, they sniped suspected ones.

The authorities not only permitted this, but encouraged it. Always practical they decided that a device which sacrificed a few hundred subjects was a good device if it increased the war spirit of many millions. So they placarded Germany with rewards for spies, which they said filled the Fatherland. They did this for two reasons. First, to add conviction to their charges that a ring of jealous enemies had brought about the war, and secondly to arouse the anger of the people. Indeed, hatred is considered by the German leaders to be the motive force in empire building.

I was so impressed with the significance of this that I described it in detail in my earlier volume. As time goes on, I feel its significance even more. The German peoples, with some notable exceptions, are submissive to authority and easily led. It is my belief that they could have been led along good paths just as readily as along bad.

Without going into archæology and genealogy—which might be needlessly confusing—we can take as the most conspicuous exception a type of Prussia

found in Berlin and eastward. It is this type which dominates the rest—a type with neck and cranium approximately the same diameter and heavy jowls nearly twice as broad. He is a Hindenburg, not a Goethe, a Schiller, a Mozart, a Strauss, an Ehrlich or an Anton Lang. The type is seldom seen among Americans of German descent, since it had little occasion to leave the land it dominated.

Most human beings are a combination of the animal and the spiritual; with civilisation tending to subordinate the animal. In the dominating Prussian caste, however, the animal is always the master—which explains why this type believes in force and respects only force, and is totally unable to grasp certain psychological traits in other people. During its migratory stage in remote ages it probably lost its sense of humour somewhere in Masurian bogs. It is only because the majority of the Germans have fallen under the sway, physical and thence moral, of the brutish minority that they have become a menace and not a helpful neighbour in the community of nations.

For three generations the growing millions of Germany have been moulded by the "blond beast" of Nietzsche. If the process continues, for three or five or ten generations, they can not escape being irretrievably coarsened, however much mechanical efficiency they may develop. It is this which caused one lovable South German professor with whom I confidentially discussed the matter to express his deep-seated conviction that his countrymen can be saved in the higher sense only through a defeat which will obliterate the fetish of militarism.

The hate lectures which I heard delivered by Ger-

304 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

man professors were not casual fragments of oratory, but a studied part of the plan to make warriors of all Germans through the instrument of education. In their leaders' conception the world tends towards pacifistic decay, a decay in which "Thou shall not kill" becomes an ever clearer guiding post. Therefore, in their opinion, if one nation can preserve the old instincts of battle, it can conquer the rest. That is why I never expect the present leaders of Germany to exercise any great restraint upon their subjects' giving vent to their passions when among their enemies.

Linked closely to all this is intimidation, a quality which not only persists in Germany but is being further developed. That it long ago had official sanction is especially clear from the Kaiser's speech at Bremerhafen on July 27, 1900, to his troops departing for China to suppress the Boxer uprising.

"You now go forth to fight against a well-armed and cruel enemy. When you come in contact with the enemy, strike him down. Quarter is not to be given. Prisoners are not to be made. Whoever falls into your hands, will be at your mercy.

"Just as a thousand years ago the Huns, under the leadership of Attila, gained a reputation by which they still live in historical tradition, so may the German name be known in such a fashion in China that no Chinaman will ever dare again look askance at a German. The blessing of the Lord be upon you! The prayers of the whole nation and my earnest wishes accompany each of you. Open the path for culture once for all."

Fourteen years later I heard my first details of the massacre of Louvain—and I got them not in Belgium.

Britain or in France, but in Germany. At noon, on the 2d of September, 1914, an American friend and I went into the open court of the Zollernhof restaurant after the wildly-cheered Sedan Day procession had passed down Unter den Linden. We managed to jump into two seats in the crowded restaurant at a large table, and were soon in conversation with the Germans gathered at it. The war was in its infancy, Germany seemed irresistible, and consequently nearly every German insisted upon airing "war secrets" with every one with whom he came in contact.

One of the men took a letter from his pocket, which he proudly read. It was from his son and written before the authorities realised the importance of tightening up the censorship at the Front. All details were set down in an interesting, boyish way from the time the company entrained at Berlin until the time it was billeted at the Rue de la Station in Louvain. The lad then went on to describe how the company was aroused after dark and told that Belgian civilians were killing German soldiers in the street. They were then assigned a definite nearby district in which they were ordered to round up from cellar to garret every male from fifteen to sixty. These were taken to the square before the Station where the boy saw some of them shot. He believed that many more of them were shot later. "It seemed terrible, father," he concluded. "But our officers said it was more humane to be strict at the beginning and by making an example of a few towns the rest would more readily obey."

Some apologists for Germany say that there are ruffians in all countries and in all armies. Granted, but we should distinguish between a Government which

306 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

aims at ideals and seeks to diminish criminal tendencies among its people, and a Government which in itself is criminal. The nation with the first may have considerable house-cleaning to do; but, at any rate, it can work towards the highest civilisation. On the other hand, a nation led by criminals can not escape becoming debased unless it develops a new kind of leadership.

Suppose for example that the President of the United States went over to Hoboken and made a speech to departing troops after the manner of Wilhelm's "Hunsof-Attila" speech! Suppose that one of our ambassadors brought forth in the course of a war such as this irrefutable accusation that the President and his Cabinet, in connivance with another power, had deliberately willed the war and were entirely responsible for it! Suppose that to further their selfish ends they planned murder and arson among nations at peace with us! Suppose that our governing officials wished to remain in the good graces of some small neutral nation while at the same time they considered it advantageous to sink the ships of that nation! In order to do both they would smile into the faces of the little nation's diplomats while behind the backs of these they would order their sailors to destroy so completely the neutral vessel and its crew that there would be no trace left upon the land or the sea to tell of the crime—*this despite the fact that in all history of war up to the twentieth century there is not a single case of a neutral ship being destroyed by a belligerent on the high seas.* Suppose in short that the American President and his Cabinet had committed act after act which resulted in most of the world being leagued against us! Knowing this.

would we back up such a set of officials and perpetuate their policy?

Consider this question well, for the overwhelming majority of the subjects of the Hohenzollerns are still answering it in the affirmative. They are doing so partly because they are duped, partly because they have grown "patriotically" calloused to the rest of mankind, and partly to escape the staggering taxation consequent upon defeat. Such is our enemy.

There are some well-meaning souls among us who feel that though Germany should be defeated we should strive to enable the German people to escape the terrible financial burdens of the war, once they see the error of their ways. If such persons can devise any practical method of combining the two, their place is at the head of a new kind of natural laws and finance.

If a man who became an inebriate at twenty swears off at thirty, he has done something commendable and hopeful in the change. The remainder of his life will be better for it. But can he logically expect that the change of heart will automatically enable him to be unaffected by ten drunken years? By a parity of reasoning can the German people leap joyously into a war which promises early victory and abundant loot, destroy and kill until they realise that they have bitten off more than they can chew, then cry quits and expect to start life again as if nothing had happened? Unless they win sweepingly they cannot do so even though all the nations that they have forced to pour out blood and treasure in self-preservation should wipe the slate clean of the bill against them.

Most of the belligerents will be reeling under a war debt with the coming of peace, with the attendant in-

308 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

ternational complications of settling gigantic foreign loans. The Germans, however, boast that their money has circulated in their own country—that they merely owe themselves. Very well. Let us take the hypothetical extreme of a defeated people refusing to pay themselves. Suppose they should throw the whole Empire into the melting pot and transform a highly militaristic socialism into a highly organised peace socialism. Or, falling short of such an extreme, suppose that the German people some day merely rid themselves of the international outlaws who rule them and so liberalise their institutions that they no longer plot destruction and dissension abroad! In brief, suppose they develop some kind of a democracy that doesn't need constant watching with a gun!

Then will certain circles of I-told-you-so's in England and America insist to the rest of us that it was the German people themselves who effected the change, and they will probably add that if we had but trusted them to arrange their own affairs, we might have been spared rivers of blood and torrents of tears.

For myself I have seen the Empire on the march and I know that a change from within can only be stimulated by a force from without such as the world has never known. Should the change come, I shall rejoice. But I shall insist upon giving the credit to whom credit is due.

I would turn back through memory's galleries to look upon men and women toiling in clanging foundries and beehives of Allied war-activity; and I'd see mile on mile of trenches where men live and suffer and die. For week on week I would cheer the returning troops could they all tramp past in grand review; and I would stand

with uncovered head while after them the miles of lorries filled with human wreckage rolled. But in honouring the living I would not be unmindful of the dead. Beneath many skies I saw them march away, and I saw them fight; and in fancy I would wish to see them once again as they rise in hosts from the slime by the Yser river and the slopes above the Meuse. From Poland's plain to Picardy I would see them all and in reverence bow my head. And I'd see, too, the men that went down in the little ships that swept the sea lanes clear.

It is upon such as these and not upon the people of Germany that gratitude should be heaped with the breaking of the dawn.

CHAPTER XVI

THE QUICKSANDS

THE Imperial German Government has spun its web of informants around the globe; yet despite its unbounded sources of information it has committed calamitous blunders on seemingly simple points. It has heaped up statistics concerning the material of other nations, while it has blindly insisted on ignoring their temperaments.

Were the world solely materialistic Germany would have won decisively because of her early scientific exploitation of all things tangible. She has failed to win because her conduct has aroused moral forces sufficient to stimulate the creation of enough material forces to balance her own. She will lose when we have further increased our material forces until they overbalance hers. Since, in the nature of the case, it is physically possible for us to do this, Germany's obviously sane course would be to try every device which might reduce our stimulus to create.

In the fifth year of an exhausting struggle it is necessary for both sides to plan every move with the studied consideration of the expert in chess. Neither can afford a really bad play now. There must come a time when the German leaders will see themselves reduced to a limited number of possible moves; and at such a time a Prince Bülow would prove infinitely more dan-

gerous to the Allies than a Tirpitz or a Ludendorff. The main trend of an indefinite period of history may conceivably be determined by whatever type of man is in the graces of the Kaiser at the last great forking of the road.

In considering Germany's chances let us take the hypothetical case of William II visualising both sides through eyes that have looked on both in Europe and America. Suppose that through such vision he could so completely deprussianise himself that he could understand the soul of other peoples. Suppose that he could lay aside for the time his bombastic Deity partnership utterances and some night in the long grey palace by the Spree calmly weigh up his chances after silence had fallen on Berlin, a silence broken for him only by the hob-nailed measured footfalls before the black and white striped sentry box outside.

From my own observations I would have him weigh his chances thus:

I have at stake two mighty heritages—my Empire and my House. Always have I earnestly sought to enhance the power of both; so to link them that they would be inseparable, invincible. It may now be wisdom for me to limit the one that I may increase the other. Let me consider the chief weapons of the war that I may compare mine with those of my enemies as they exist in this fifth autumn of the struggle. These are first, military, which includes the army and the navy; second, economic strength which enables each side to hold out; third, diplomacy, the instrument for maintaining unity at home and creating dissension abroad.

Neither side can win through the first until it has a

312 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

preponderance of men and material. Such preponderance might not only be gained by positive increase, but in a negative way by impairing through blockade the economic life of the other side. My enemies can continue to develop their striking power from the reservoir of the United States, while my only remaining source is Russia. Conditions there are such, however, that they do not permit me to add to my military machine sufficiently to enable it to bring victory through great offensives. The Russians who are willing to fight for me are few. To dragoon great numbers and put them into the line would be to transfer Tannenberg to the Western front—save that it is the enemy who could hang out the flags.

For defensive purposes, on the contrary, the Russians are highly useful in the colossal work they can be directed to perform in the rear of the fighting. By utilising them and other impressed labour we can strengthen line behind line of defence which must be successively stormed by my enemies under heavy losses, while their advances must always be over country which we have devastated as we fall back.

If we could for a long time successfully maintain a stubborn defence we could undoubtedly continue to sink more of *Britain's* tonnage than she can replace, even though construction of *world* tonnage somewhat exceeds destruction. This accomplishment of my U-boats must arouse bitter thoughts among an island people whose world greatness is the sea. Coupled with this the heavy losses piled up by the enemy in attacking our fortified lines would be distasteful, especially to the French who now see clearly the importance of man power in the industrial and commercial struggle after the war—a

struggle into which each nation will be driven in order to survive the leaden heritage of Armageddon's debt.

Such enemy discomfort is for us the brighter aspect. There is indeed a darker side. Can we continue a long successful defence? If we were economically but little inferior to our enemies, yes. But unfortunately we have long since fallen to a level far below them. Utilising every scrap of material, native and imported, we have been enabled to hold out. But should the limit be reached we may crack rapidly owing to the fact that we shall have used up all our reserves of various supplies. It is the economic shortage which causes me most anxiety, for in a material way it is certain seriously to cripple my armies in the race for preponderance of military machinery, while at the same time it slowly impairs the morale of the troops and the civilian population—a morale maintained only through hope of ultimate victory. The terrible truth is that we are like a walnut which is slowly decaying inside. The shell is still strong but we must give it the appearance of even greater strength to our enemies.

Since I now see clearly that for the present, at least, we can no longer conquer in all directions, it is well to face this bitter realisation to ascertain what I can still hold and the concessions which I must make to hold it.

Herein lies a difficulty which is not generally understood. I am an outside world which is prone to look upon me as absolute and therefore able to switch the whole course along any desired course. Unfortunately this is not entirely true. Like my ancestors I have ruled absolute through the good-will of my great military Junkers. I am always able to oppose and crush any individuals among them, but it would be calamitous to attempt

314 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

to obstruct any line of national policy upon which they are collectively agreed. They are so dominated by the spirit of rule by caste that they will fight to the end to maintain their ancient privileges. They will be successful, as always, unless there comes a time when my subjects' hopes begin to wane in the deepening shadow of defeat. The masses may then be goaded to demand two things—first, a real share in the government, and then a definite statement of peace terms.

Because of such possibility it might be well not to delay too long. One of my great fears is that my Junkers may obstinately refuse all concessions to the people to the point that our unity would be broken in the last stages. If, however, they should agree to equal suffrage in Prussia there would probably be but little real change in our method of government as it affects world policy. Bavaria has equal suffrage, and have not her sons fought just as fiercely as my Prussians to extend my frontiers? Are there any,—with the possible exception of my most learned professors,—who have hurled more violent tirades against the English than has Crown Prince Rupert of Bavaria? Or could anybody defend more ardently my divine right to rule than Reichskanzler Hertling, a Bavarian?

So, too, in the matter of the rearrangement of Reichstag districts according to population. By this concession our class power would be slightly impaired but not seriously damaged—always provided that we maintain the Bundesrat* (which is appointed by myself and my co-sovereigns) and do not make ministerial offices subject to real control by the Reichstag.

I fear that nothing short of an early impending de-

* See chapter II.

feat would cause my Junkers to see the light sufficiently to make these concessions. Yet if they should do so in time and with grace my people would be so flattered that we should have a new period of that unity which is essential to success. Moreover, important circles among our enemies would receive the impression that Germany had accomplished great strides towards democracy—an impression which should make some of our subsequent moves far less difficult.

Behind this smoke cloud of democracy we could complete the plans for our diplomatic offensive. At this point looms another great internal difficulty. My Junkers and my Great Industrialists are so imbued with one highly developed trait of the bull that in the more delicate manoeuvres they are hopelessly lost. That trait is the lowering of the head once an objective is sighted and crashing unswervingly at it. This method is often annihilatingly successful, but from now on it will spell disaster for us if persisted in.

Both my Junkers and my Great Industrialists desire a peace without conquests and indemnities and will fight for it to the end, unless they can be made to see in time that the people will not support such plans when the grip of our enemies becomes too tight. Another of my great fears is that they will refuse to modify their extreme demands until we have little left to bargain with. Most of Junkerdom always feared the growing power of Russia and wished a war which would so cripple her that not only would our own great landed estates in the east of Prussia be secured, but new acquisitions could be made at the expense of Russia. This is an industrial age, however, and the Great Industrialists in the past score of years have begun to develop a power in the

316 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Empire which is becoming even greater than that of the Junker. Now, although the former like the Junkers wish the East they insist also upon the West. While the semblance of a chance of victory remains they will refuse to yield the occupied iron districts of France, also Belgium with the coast of Flanders.

If, however, we can put our internal house in order regarding war aims we can next consider by what practical methods of strategy we can out-general our enemies on the field of politics. We have some very bad cards and some very excellent ones. Our trunk line of policy must be to gain control of the East.

In any event we shall be first in trade with Russia, for our geographical and other natural advantages will insure our pre-eminence. We can do this with fair trade. But we desire very much more than fair trade. We must enact commercial treaties with the several Russias which will compel the people to buy necessities from us at our prices. The East will make German economic strength convalescent until it becomes the old strength which will encircle the globe.

The very opposite of this would be the realisation by the enemy of President Wilson's aim that all Poland be reconstituted with a Polish port. I wonder how much sentiment there is in America for such a programme? There is certainly little understanding of it among the majority of the people. Why, even the compilers of their school geographies unwittingly helped us by invariably printing the word P-O-L-A-N-D across only a corner of Russia and having none of the letters fall on the map sections marked Germany and Austria. Therefore most Americans have grown up una-

were that the majority of the population of certain regions of Germany and Austria are Poles.

We will of course fight to the last to prevent being dismembered to form a united Poland. This is a decidedly more important matter with us than the retention of Alsace-Lorraine. I agree with Bismarck when he said: "Any arrangement likely to satisfy Poland in the provinces of West Prussia and Posen and even in Silesia is impossible without the breaking up and decomposing of Prussia."

I do not expect the extremity of such a peace, but on the contrary one which will enable my people to exploit Russia, gradually in the beginning, but ere long almost wholly.

Trade resumption prospects with the western world are alarming and the outlook would indeed be black for us if all our enemies could stand as a unit against us in commercial matters until we yielded to their demands. But this is a practical world of business rivalry between individuals and between nations. By utilising this sufficiently we should soon have our present enemies bidding for the German market for their raw materials.

In the matter of peace terms each side can make an offer which the people of the other side would insist be accepted by their leaders rather than make further sacrifices. In other words each side can draw a line beyond which its enemy would not fight, such a varying line of course with the changing phases of the struggle. The stronger our power of resistance appears to the other side at any given time the more favourably for ourselves can we draw this line. Had we not forced the United States into the war we could have set a much better line than we can from now on ever hope to set.

318 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

Of our mistakes in policy that has been by far our greatest. We made it because in 1916 our privations had become so great that my people began to grow discouraged and troublesome to such an extent that a general apprehension arose that in a war of endurance we could not last as long as our western enemies. As events have since transpired we see that from our position in the trough of the waves we overestimated the height of the crest upon which they rode. Though we knew that Russia was growing powerless we did not foresee that she would fall impotent so precipitately. We further did not realise that our propaganda was gnawing so deeply into France—as evidenced by the breakdown of the Craonne offensive in 1917. We were also surprised when Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer confessed that the Allies would be in financial difficulties were it not for America's entry.

But greatest of all we did not remotely realise that America could be a factor in the war. To antagonise her was our supreme blunder. We should have sent more hymn books and less bombs. Until she came into the war Europe was divided into two pieces of sand-paper, each trying to wear down the other. Had we been less sweeping in our U-boat decree and been merely content to nibble away at shipping we might well have convinced our enemies that they were rubbing even more off themselves than off us. We might have been the best bargainer at a conference. But our terrible mistake has resulted in the rubbing against us of new and heavier sand-paper.

Could I offer enough to one of my three chief enemies to satisfy her into an unwillingness to continue the struggle I should be pulling the prop from beneath the

other two. Two years ago it was an axiomatic illusion with us that we could always buy Americans; to-day we are bewildered at the realisation that America is more sweeping in her demands against us than are her allies. There is nothing we can offer her, for she wants nothing save a change in our political ideals. Such a change we must refuse above all else, for it would toll the death-knell of our whole system and the kind of greatness we have built upon it.

For more than four years France has felt our hand upon her throat. From the very beginning the war became for her a struggle for existence. Her losses have been enormous and her strain nerve-wracking. Suppose that the French should wake up some morning to read that we had made a genuine offer of peace on a basis of status quo ante as it existed between her and us, with the addition of a willingness to submit Alsace and Lorraine to a plebiscite under international supervision of the voting after the signing of peace. We could cleverly agree to do this by insisting that other nations do the same—such as England with Ireland, and thereby very simply we could create arguments and dissensions.

In the meantime we should inspire our various enemies with the kind of propaganda suited to their several needs. In the case of America it would be well to bring about a better feeling towards us. The Americans are a sporting people who admire fair play. If, taking care not to overplay our hand, we should treat American prisoners especially well, give them prompt facilities for writing and transmission of letters, indulge in airplane courtesies in dropping information regarding the fate of their flying men who have fallen be-

320 THE EDGE OF THE QUICKSANDS

hind our lines, show kindness to seamen intercepted by our U-boats, and so on, we might assuage their bitter feeling. Regarding England and France, on the other hand, we should show no weakness, only strength. France has, to be sure, tied up enormous sums in Russia which might induce her to continue the war even beyond the line of our Western peace terms. Yet the right kind of propaganda might inspire the masses to refuse to fight for a people who had seemingly betrayed them. To stop bleeding by the mere acceptance of our offer! What a temptation for France!

If France showed a desire to withdraw on this basis the war spirit in the United States would suffer a serious relapse, for it is upon France that the superstructure of sentiment has been reared. The backfire from this relapse would make British politics seethe. Both in France and America we could inflame the reply to every get-on-with-the-war utterance in England that England wished to continue the war from purely selfish methods of conquest. This would not be true, but it would probably serve our purpose to the extent that an anti-war cabinet would come into power—a cabinet supported in part by some of the privileged class of hereditary landed proprietors who are fearful lest the conflict be waged to a stage which will endanger their ancient rights.

The world war is so complex that it is almost impossible to forecast the linking up of any number of details. The insignificant of to-day frequently becomes the colossal of to-morrow and upsets all calculations. But in the matter of a broad line of policy it is simple to plan a course. In brief, since we cannot win offensively, we must calmly consider how long we can

endure defensively. Next we must convince our enemies of the enormous price they must pay to drive us back by force of arms. Then comes our bargaining, which must always be conducted so as to create friction. This can be done to some extent while hostilities are still in progress, but to a superlative degree if I can but entice my enemies to a peace conference while I still possess great bargaining power.

In the event of the worst, I can so fall back that I can lure my enemies to the edge of the quicksands behind which I have taken refuge—my last great line of defence, the line upon which I will risk my all. If they decide that the quickest way to end the struggle with me is the short route through the sands they will be dragged down into premature peace and leave me to rebuild my power.

The wondrous hope that quickens my pulse in the approaching crisis is that they will be weary of the long march and choose the nearest way. I shall tremble when they hesitate for if they decide to shut their teeth and go around the quicksands my sun of greatness will have set. For if my enemies but resolve to stand together upon the basis of the American terms and use every weapon they possess the Germany of the future will be but a great nation among a number of great nations and not the most powerful and awe-inspiring empire that the world has ever known.

FINIS